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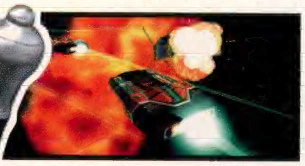

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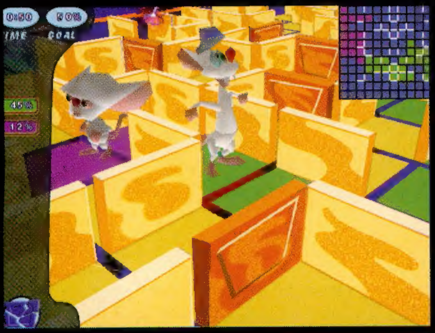

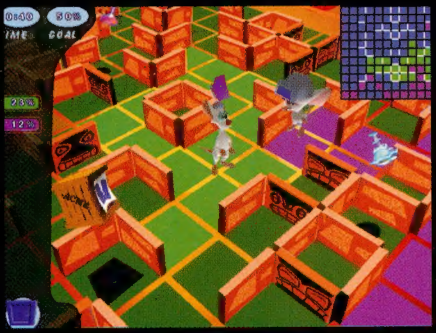

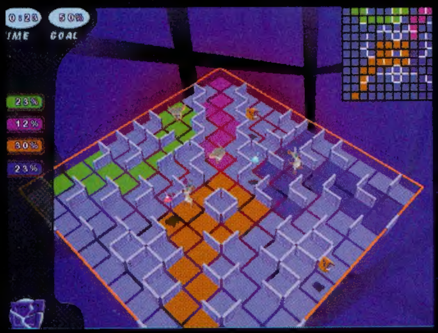

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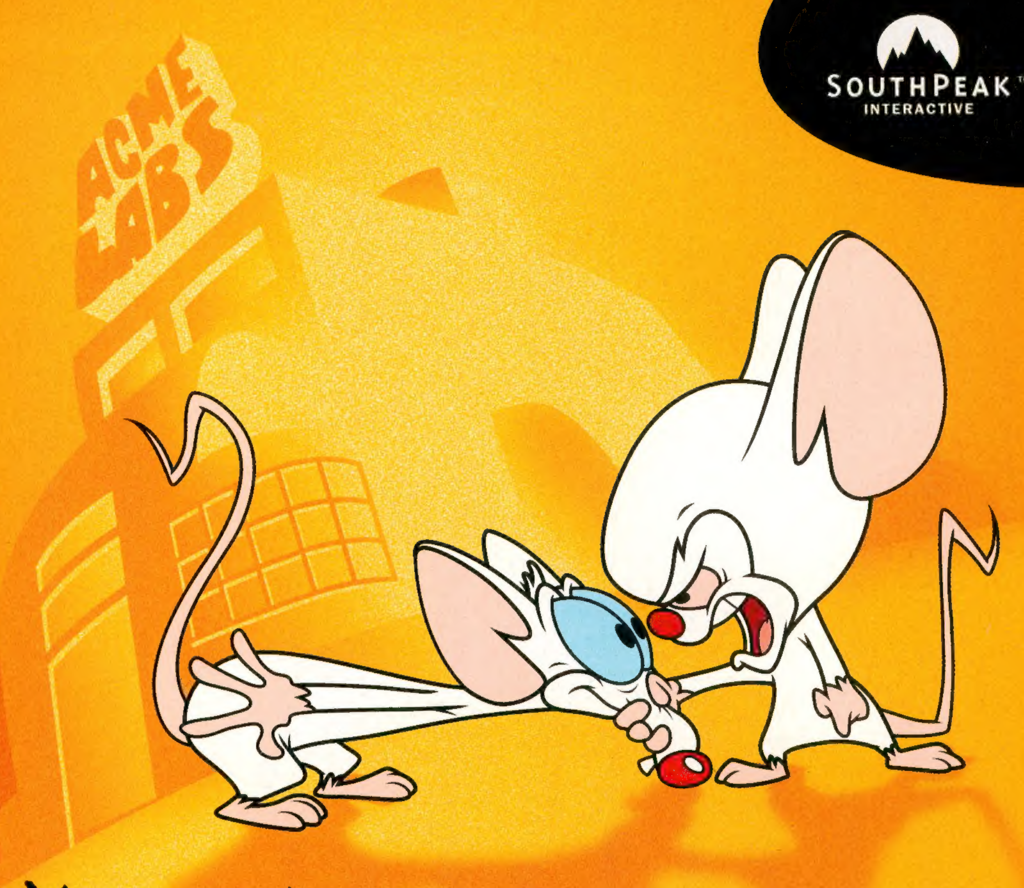

You see Pinky, the plan is to develop a secret hypnotic message that will make humans think I am their almighty ruler, and embed it in an action-packed video game. Naturally we will be the stars. People will play the game by themselves and become horribly addicted. Then they will want to play the game with their friends, and their friends will become addicted. Soon, they will play the game over the Internet, a silly little information infrastructure that humans use to "chat" with each other. Anyway, once we control the Internet, every human being will bow down before me, their rightful master. And by the turn of the new millennium, the world will be ours!

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THERE COMES A TIME...

When I started working on PC GAMER in October 1995, the PC was a very different beast to today. PC GAMER's cover game, the original *Hexen*, ran on a 486/33 with 4Mb RAM. Windows 95 was an irrelevance, and no-one had ever seen this game called *Quake*. There was no such thing as a 3Dfx card and fewer people used modems for on-line gaming than owned private jets.

Three-and-a-half years later, as I leave PC GAMER, the machine has evolved faster and more dramatically than any other technology. Pop a Pentium II and Voodoo card into your machine and you can effortlessly run *any* game in the world today, including, via emulation, the latest N64 smash hits such as *Zelda* (see page 26). Crucially, the restrictions today's designers face aren't so much technological as imaginative. Since the PC's inception in 1980, ultra-ambitious artists and programmers have been restrained by memory limitations, incompatibilities and zero 3D power... and now there's virtually nothing holding them back.

What will come from this relatively sudden freedom over the next two years remains to be seen, but games like *Black & White* and *Quake III Arena* must be an indication and an inspiration to us all. Brave, gorgeous, technically marvellous, focussed and utterly *different*. Sure, they're still unfinished, but as a shoot-for-the-stars blueprint they can only enrapture us consumers and spur the development community on.

The amazing power, ease of use and falling prices are slowly allowing developers to concentrate on creating art rather than endless battles against hardware science. The journey has a way to go – release dates and getting two joypads to work simultaneously spring to mind – but it's mostly downhill from here. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that PC gaming's finally made it.

Seems like a good time to go. Thanks for all your support and I hope you've enjoyed it half as much as me. Bye.

James Flynn
Editor

SCOOP!

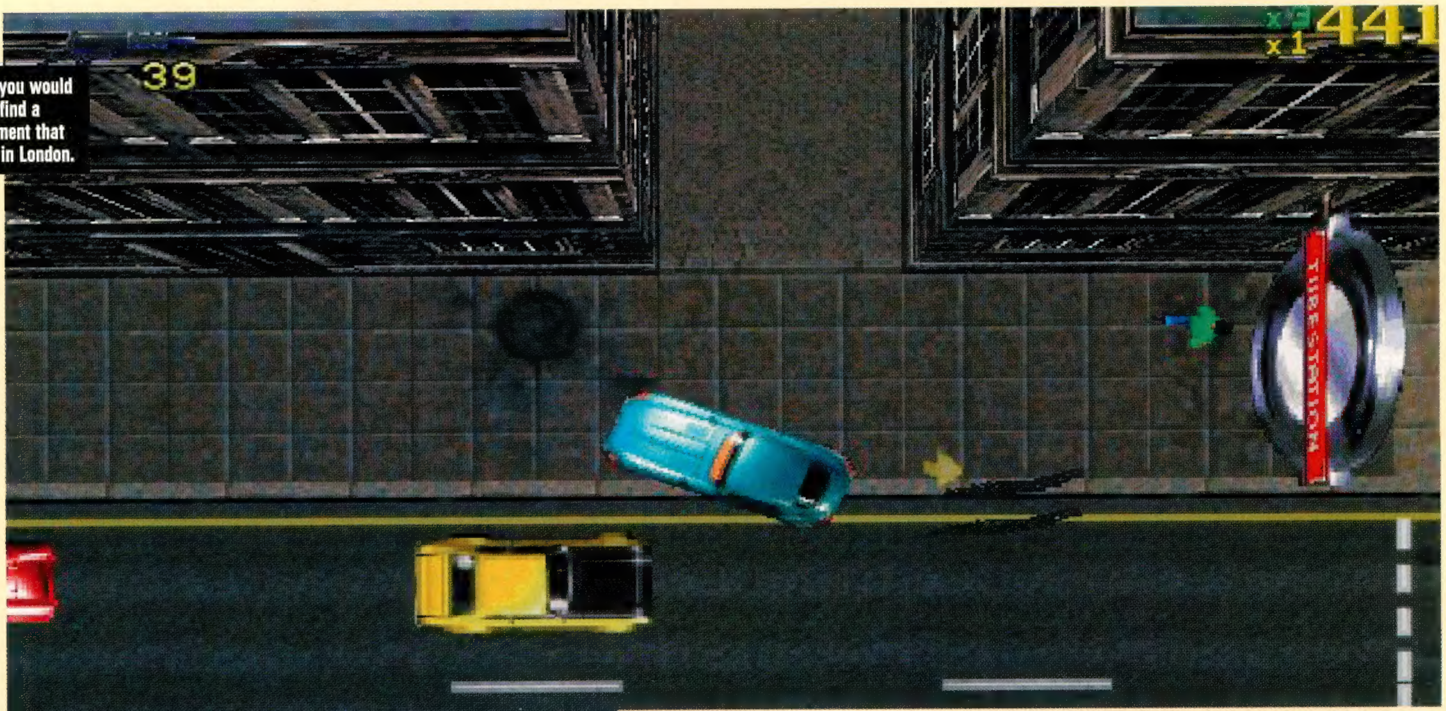
"Go crashing through the lobby at the

Your first look at...

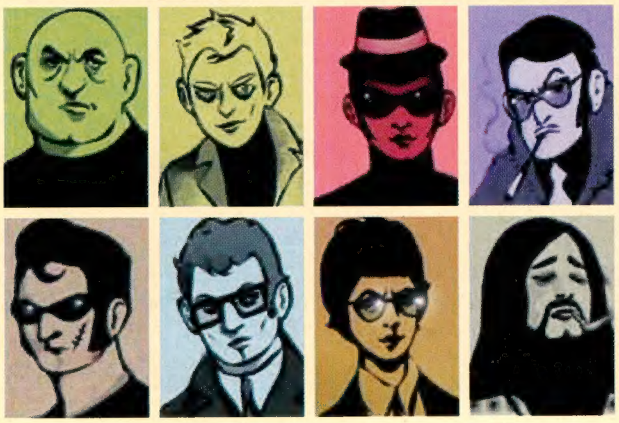
GRAND THEFT AUTO LONDON 1970

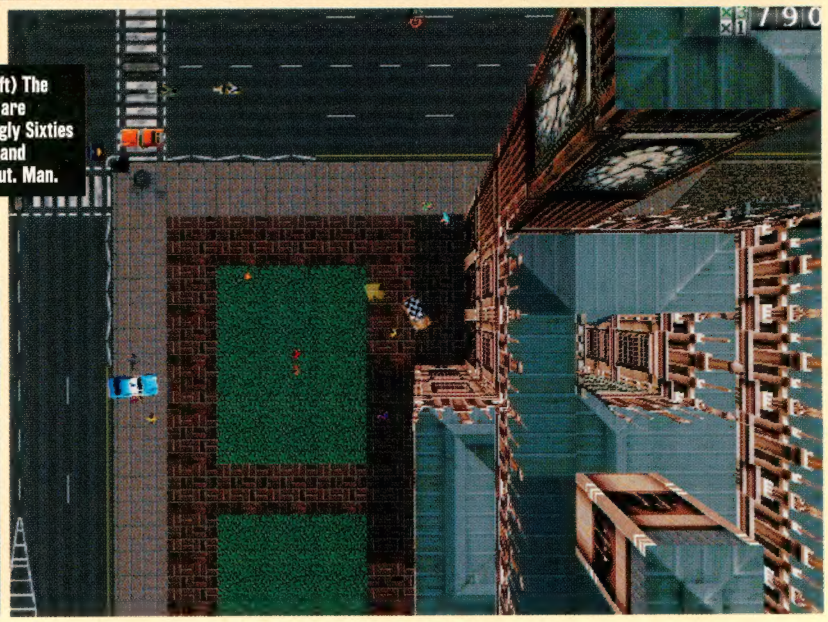
Strictly speaking, if it's in Britain it's just called "stealing cars".

By KIERON GILLEN



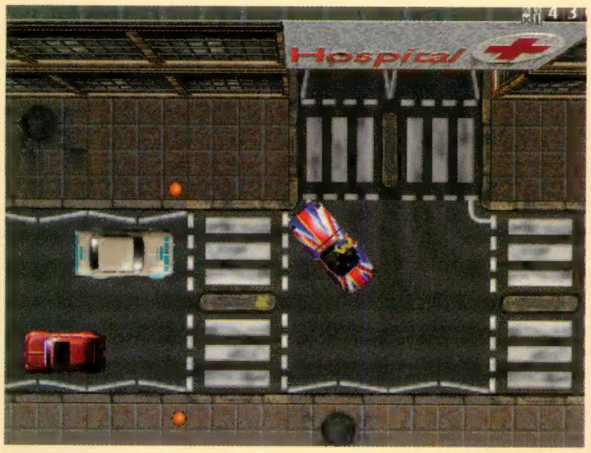
As if you would ever find a pavement that wide in London.



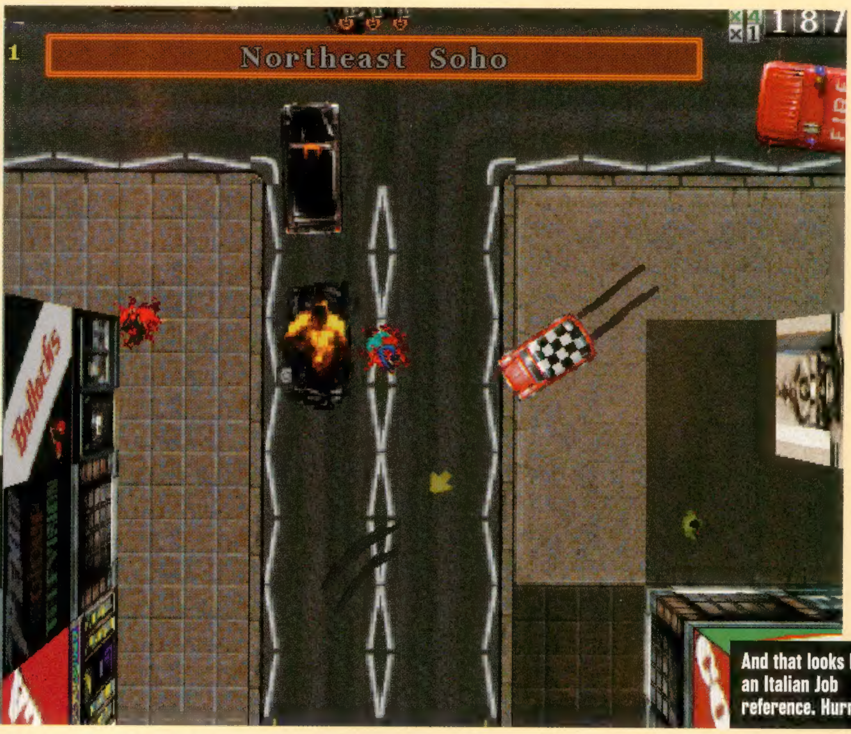


(Below left) The portraits are convincingly Sixties too. Far (and indeed) out. Man.

Houses of Parliament and gun down cockney-barrow-boys.”



(Above) One of *GTA: London's* many film references. I refuse to write 'shagadelic'. Sorry.



And that looks like an Italian Job reference. Hurrah.

EVER since some techy-bloke realised that the room-sized mainframe that he was meant to be using to calculate scientific theorem could be put to far less productive (but more fun) use, there's been a history of games that dare to be a little controversial. Most of them are dreadful, using shock tactics to cover up the gaping hole where the actual game should be. But occasionally someone manages to do the brilliantly rock and roll thing and mix the thrill of infamy with the thrill of an absorbing game. And then we all get to put on our spiked leather jackets, slick back our hair and live out our fantasy of being bad-boy James Dean types, while having a stupendously good time.

Perhaps the best example is DMA's unparalleled *Grand Theft Auto*. It managed to take all the evil joys of being an operative of organised crime syndicates and inject them into a defiantly old-school game. Lives. No saved games. Over-head view. All the things that the gaming executives were dismissing, saying (between huge drags from their over-sized cigars) that "no-one wants to play them. And nice pony-tail, by the way". Of course, DMA just released their chrome-plated behemoth of a game and rolled in the cash and artistic kudos. We placed it at number eight in last year's Top 100. You lot voted it as number two in yours. All hailed it as an original game, but it had the sheer audacity to sell shopfulls too. Questions were asked in the House of Lords whether it was immoral. Questions were asked in every pub whether it was immoral and how *good* it was.

Driving over queues of Saffron-clad Hari Krishna monks was a kick too.

While a true sequel *(GBH)* will be arriving later in the year, until then we'll have this mission pack to sate our hunger for more. It's, as some of you may have deduced through reading the title at the top of the page, set in London during the summer of 1970, and is completely awash with imagery from that period. *And* more entertaining jokes than a whole Fast Show series. Setting the game in 1970 should create a more intriguing and malevolent world than if it was played during the more customary 1966. The hippy dream of peace and love is falling apart, leaving piles of burn-outs in its wake, but Sixties kitsch has yet to be swept away by the sheer "How could they?" awfulness of glam rock. The original *GTA* looked to both serious and laugh-riot films as inspirations, taking as much from Naked Gun as Goodfellas. The expansion pack seems to do the same with Britain, freely mixing The Long Good Friday and Austin Powers.

gold/yellow
BROWN

That refrain runs through the rest of the game: take *GTA* and move *everything* to swinging London. The sound-effects are all authentic, with full-on Sweeney-esque Police sirens and spluttering engines noises emitting from the 30 period-specific cars. You'll certainly hear the chimes of Big Ben punctuating your shotgun-blasts. All our favourite London landmarks will be included, so expect to find yourself crashing through the lobby at the Houses of Parliament, gunning down cockney-barrow-boys in Hyde Park and all the other japes we enjoy during weekend trips to the big smoke. And, most importantly, you drive on the left. If you want to.

GROOVY TUNES

The first game still boasts the best in-game soundtrack ever, doing for videogames what Reservoir Dogs and Pulp Fiction did for film scores. This expansion seems to be continuing the good work, with music taken from B-movie car-chase scenes of the Seventies for full-on retro appeal.

The plot's been completely changed to fit our climes, and is populated with characters such as the Crisp Brothers, who rule London with a steely fist (any resemblance to any character, living or dead, eh?). One's named Albert, and is a slightly camp dandy in the tradition of Noel Coward from the Italian Job. The other's a sociopathic beast called Archie who, and I quote, "favours group fighting. Five of you against one of him". They love no-one apart from their beloved evil-crone mum Doreen. And you can expect to work for and against them as the plot weaves its crooked charms.

Grand Theft Auto London 1970 is being developed not by original creators DMA, but by the relatively unproven Rockstar. From what we've seen, it looks like they're going to be able to create something that runs true to the anarchistic spirit of the original. We're polishing our blackjacks in anticipation.

GTA LONDON WILL BE FAB BECAUSE...

- **Seventies London is yours to abuse.**
- **The graphics have improved on the original.**
- **Hammond-solo a-go-go music.**
- **You'll be at the bottom of the Thames if you don't approve.**

Developer	Rock Star	**How Complete**	80%
UK Publisher	Take 2	**Release Date**	June 1998

SCOOP!

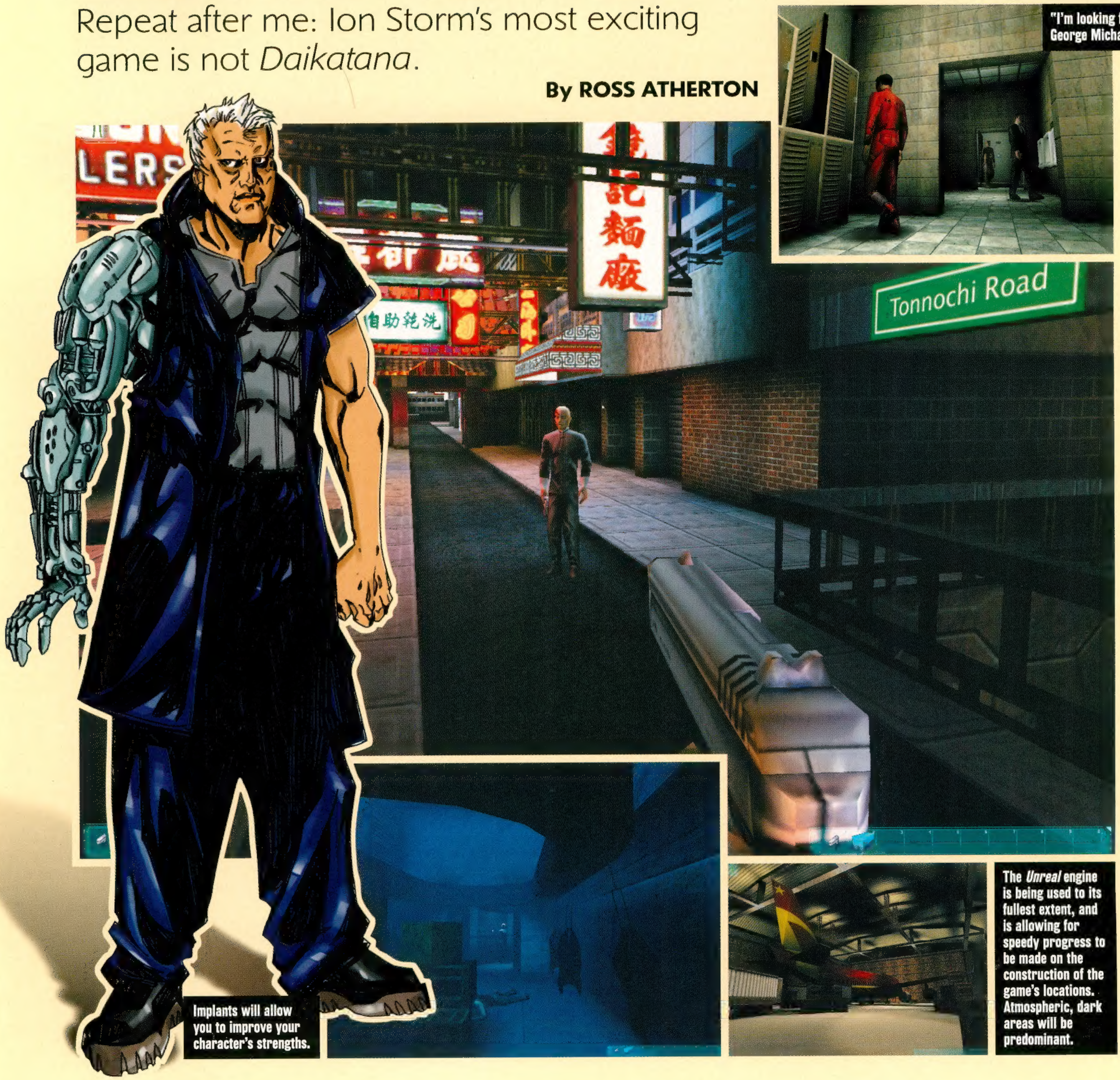
"The conversation system won't lead

Your first look at...

DEUS EX

Repeat after me: Ion Storm's most exciting game is not *Daikatana*.

By ROSS ATHERTON

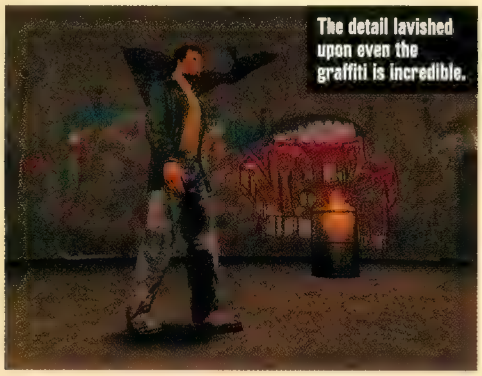


"I'm looking for George Michael."

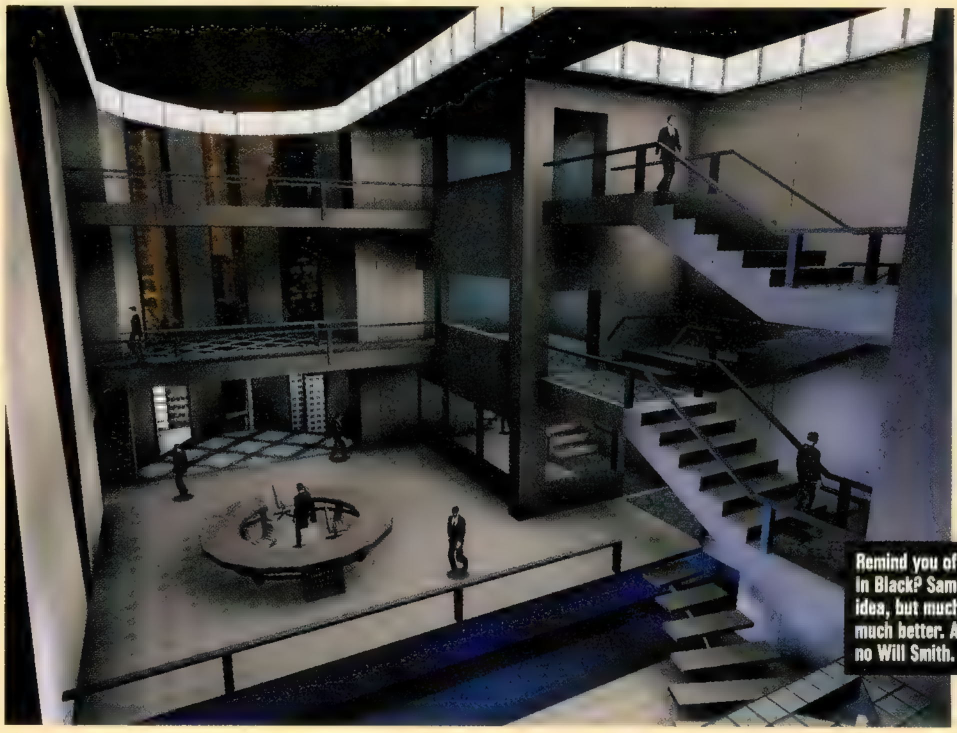
Implants will allow you to improve your character's strengths.

The *Unreal* engine is being used to its fullest extent, and is allowing for speedy progress to be made on the construction of the game's locations. Atmospheric, dark areas will be predominant.

to dead ends... and they're working on perfect lip-synching."



The detail lavished upon even the graffiti is incredible.



Remind you of Men in Black? Same idea, but much, much better. And no Will Smith.

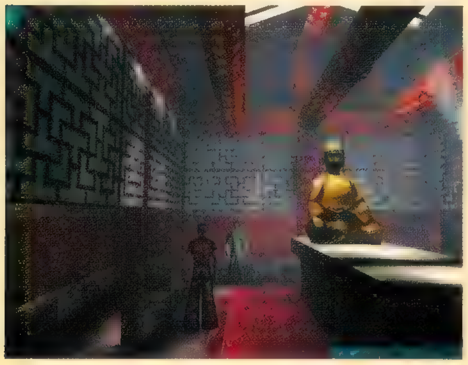
RECENTLY I read that the world is officially getting weirder. Admittedly, this was in the Fortean Times, but no-one can deny it. You only have to read the papers to witness the massive proliferation of suicidal cults, Elvis-worshippers, alien abductees and conspiracy theorists. The world's imagination has been captured by whispered tales of UFOs, cover-ups and conspiracies; yet this global pre-Millennial tension has so far manifested itself on the PC only in the shape of *The X-Files Game*. Come in, *Deus Ex*, your people need you.

While the world has been ranting and raving about *Daikatana* and Ion Storm's wavering fortunes, Warren Spector and his team have been quietly beavering away in a dark corner on what could very well be the perfect tonic to the hype. Spector calls *Deus Ex* "a real-world role-playing game" where you must make decisions about your character's development based on how you intend to solve problems – but there'll be more to it than the traditional 'fight or talk' option.

Set some fifty years in the future, your character is an anti-terrorist agent in a world on the brink of social, economic and political collapse. When you catch wind of a global conspiracy which will bring the world to its knees, your superiors don't want to know about it – so it's up to you to investigate. You'll need to travel to various countries to make contacts and follow up leads, building up a network of potential allies. The problem is knowing who to trust, and who to shoot on sight.

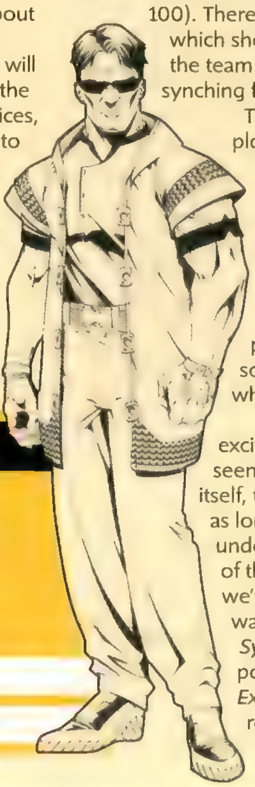
Oh, yes, there will be guns and plenty of baddies to point them at. There's already a variety of recognisable (as well as slightly futuristic) weapons implemented, including pistols, sub-machine guns, a sniper rifle and some heavier tools of destruction. But it won't always be wise to charge in, guns blazing. Stealth is always important, bearing in mind you are on your own; and guards may come running if they hear you testing out a grenade launcher on a door. You will be seriously limited by the constraints of your inventory – after all, you can't carry three heavy weapons in real life – so again, you have to make decisions about how you plan to approach problems.

When you start, your character will be a blank canvas; and you will have the opportunity, through equipment choices, skills and nano-technology implants, to improve your abilities in certain areas. Skills and implants have several levels; so you can specialise to quite a degree. For example, if you choose to enhance your shooting skills, you will shake less while aiming with the sniper rifle. If you choose to enhance your strength rather than opting for lockpicking skills, you might be able to bash down doors rather than open them quietly – and if you have enhanced hearing, you will be able to hear if there is anyone on the other side.



MILLENNIAL FEVER

While the developers claim to be inspired, visually at least, by German Impressionist art, the dark, oppressive atmospheres bear out the earlier reference to The X-Files. Indeed, all the scenes are set at night, and some of the areas are modelled on real-life locations, such as the Statue of Liberty and the streets around the Paris catacombs. Though the game is still in its early stages, there are already scores of these locations complete, as are many of the highly intelligent NPCs (of which there will be around 100). There is an organic conversation system which should never lead to dead ends, and the team are currently working on perfect lip-synching for key conversations.



Throughout the game's three acts, plot-lines will be introduced which are based on some of the darker and weirder of the conspiracy theories currently doing the rounds. Indeed, every fantastical aspect of the game has some basis in some people's statements or beliefs. And, over the coming months, the *Deus Ex* Web pages will be gradually showcasing some of the craziest stuff, as teasers to what might feature in the game.

Deus Ex is causing a stir of excitement among the few who have seen it. Like a government conspiracy itself, the game is being kept under wraps as long as possible – which is quite understandable, because while it is one of the most original and exciting games we've seen for a while, it's still a long way off. With elements of *GoldenEye*, *System Shock* and *Half-Life*, and powered by the *Unreal* engine, *Deus Ex* looks set to successfully combine role-playing with the first-person shooter in spectacular fashion. PCG

WHY *DEUS EX* WILL BE GOD-LIKE...

- **Its real-world settings will create an intense, believable atmosphere.**
- **Objects are realistic – if you can do it in real life, you can do it *Deus Ex*.**
- **You can enhance your character with skills and implants.**
- **Problems can be solved in a variety of ways, depending on your abilities.**

Developer	Ion Storm	**How Complete**	50%
UK Publisher	Eidos	**Release Date**	Christmas

SCOOP!

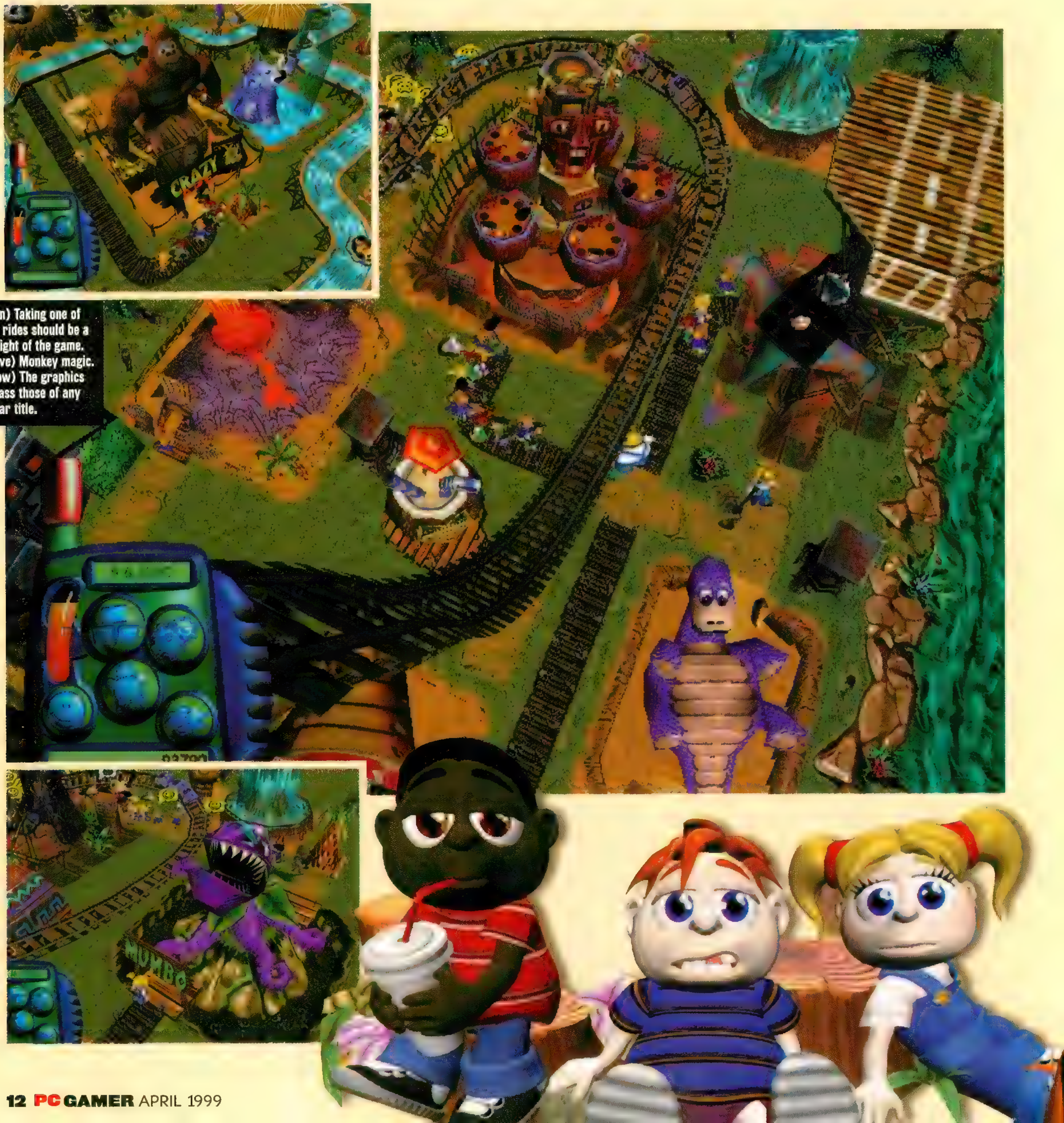
"The rides will be more advanced than

Your first look at...

THEME PARK 2

The sequel to Bullfrog's most popular game ever is making us woozy with excitement.

By JAMES FLYNN

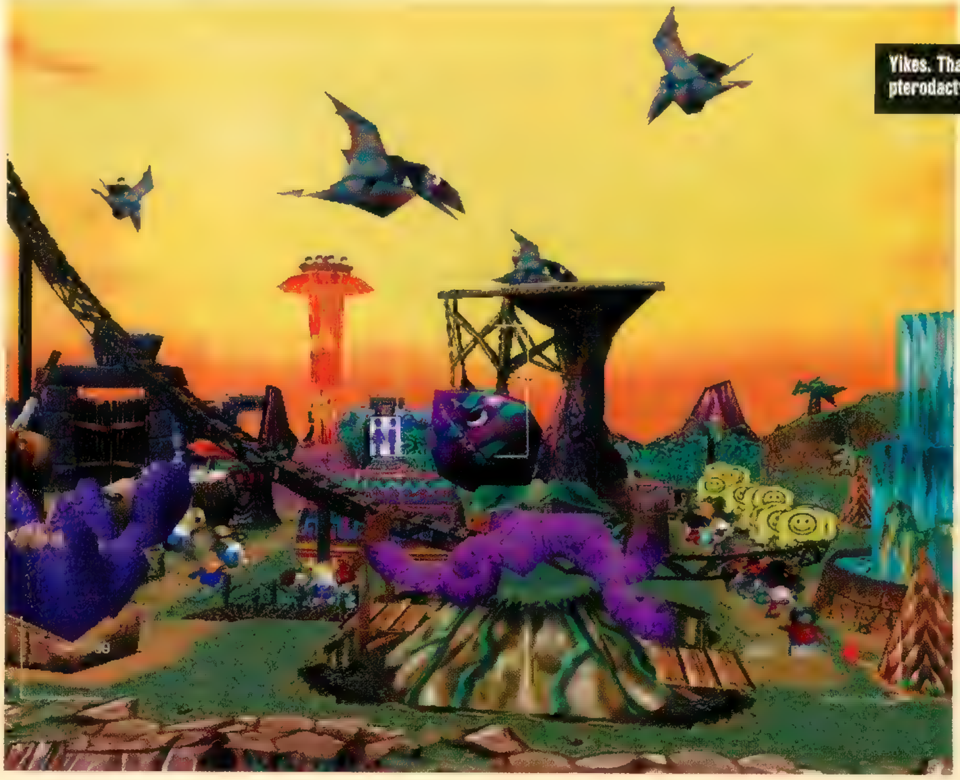


(Main) Taking one of your rides should be a highlight of the game. (Above) Monkey magic. (Below) The graphics surpass those of any similar title.

on any other similar game... try them yourself in real-time 3D."

THEME ***Park*****, like** ***SimCity*** **and** ***Championship Manager*****, is one of those games that wouldn't exist if the world made sense. The whole concept of taking one large green field and being as concerned with litter collection as you are with building world class fair rides is, quite frankly, absurd. However, if four million people's morally dubious quest to make people sick by placing burger bars near rollercoaster entrances proves anything, it's that there's no substitute for fun at other people's expense.**

Enter *Theme Park 2*, the inevitable sequel to Bullfrog's 1994 mega hit. The existence of the project has been known for some time, but it's only after prising the shots out of the developers that the scale of their ambition is clear. The most obvious switch is the one into a full 3D world, made possible using a radically modified version of Bullfrog's *Populous: The Beginning* engine. You'll be able to zoom and rotate the entire park, but the plan is that this won't be at the expense of speed. Bullfrog realise the main reason for *Theme Park's* phenomenal success was down to the fact that it ran on lower spec PCs. They are therefore using differently detailed models to allow both 3D card and unaccelerated PCs to run the game (the shots on these pages are all from the 3Dfx version).


Yikes. Thar be pterodactyls.

THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

The design possibilities this has opened up are clear. The imagination and depiction of the rides will be infinitely more advanced than on any other similar game, including *Rollercoaster Tycoon* (see page 74). It will be possible to actually try them yourself in real-time 3D (a little like the intro sequence from the original we presume) and get a feel for your attractions. This will become even more meaningful given that *Theme Park 2* will include a separate rollercoaster designer for you to play with. The success of such a feature seems guaranteed, as the game's Producer Jeff Gamon recognises. "We've built on the success of the original *Theme Park* game using the best that design and technology have to offer," he says. "Building and managing the park is only half the fun – what everyone really wants to do is ride the white-knuckle rides they've created and that's exactly what we're letting them do."

Many of the most popular features of the original will be retained such as the research and development, which gives you access to new technologies. These will vary more than before as Bullfrog are taking more trouble with the, ahem, themes in the game. You'll be able to construct your park in Lost Kingdom, Space, Fantasy and Halloween styles, with different approaches attracting different customers.

CREATE A MONSTER

While it may not seem as relevant to *Theme Park 2* as it would to, say, *SimCity 3000*, the human AI and modelling have also been dramatically updated. The push and pull factors will be reflected more accurately and have greater or more subtle impacts on your park's success than ever before. The superbly informative feedback system the original game pioneered will also remain to help you out with any problems, or just to see the results of your sadism. The team is devoted to retaining the humorous element and improving on it wherever possible.

The scenarios will hopefully be more developed than in *Theme Park* and offer fresh and distinctive challenges for you to solve. However, there will almost certainly be a freer approach to building parks designed to take advantage of the Internet. Electronic Arts will be encouraging players to experiment with building and place their parks on the Web, possibly to compete with others but mainly just to show off. The social aspect which has served so many games well is a focus in *Theme Park 2*.

The success of the *Theme* series is truly remarkable and the announcement of *Theme Park 2* makes the continuing no-news regarding *Theme Resort* quite acceptable. In fact, providing it doesn't get 'Bullfrogged' and derailed due to slippage you're looking at a serious contender for the Christmas Number 1 spot. PCG

WHY *TP 2* WILL SEND YOU LOOPY...

- **The original has sold four million copies on every format imaginable.**
- **It's the proud owner of a spanking new 3D engine.**
- **The human AI has been completely overhauled.**
- **You can ride the rollercoasters you've spent hours planning and building.**

Developer	Bullfrog	**How Complete**	70%
UK Publisher	Electronic Arts	**Release Date**	November

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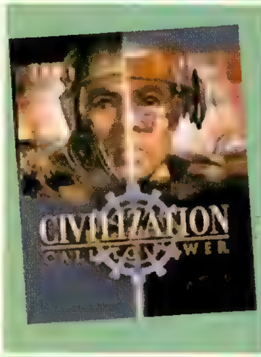

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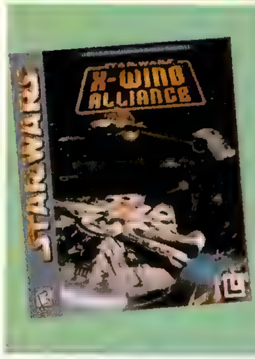

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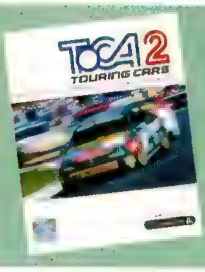

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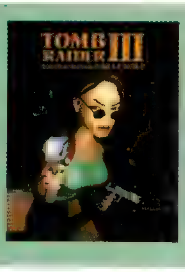

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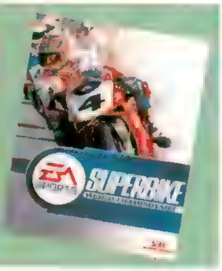

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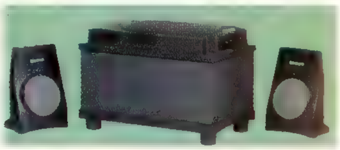

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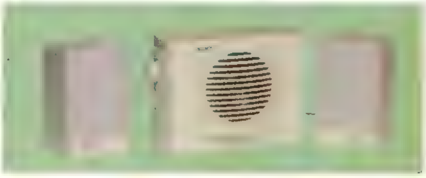

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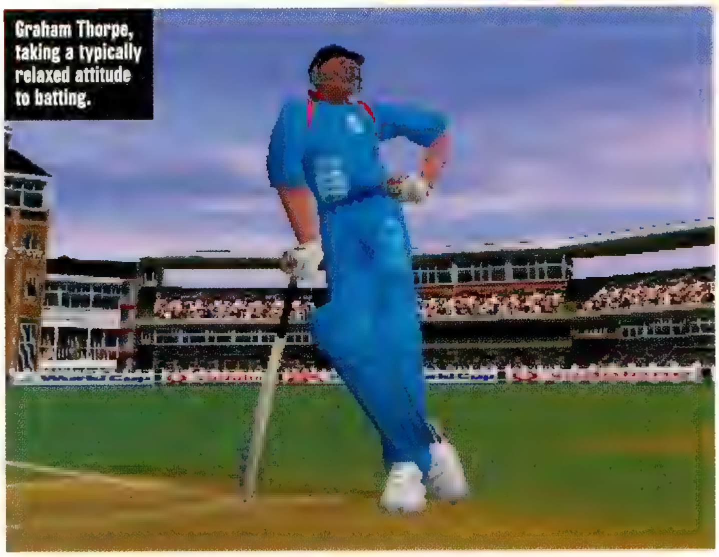
EYEWITNESS

THE PC GAMING UNIVERSE IN 11 PACKED PAGES...

SPORT

CRICKET WORLD CUP

EA Sports look firm favourites already.



Graham Thorpe, taking a typically relaxed attitude to batting.

Like a troupe of genius professors let loose in a laboratory, EA Sports have moved from one sport to the next, keeping up an astonishingly high standard of simulation each time; from football to basketball, ice hockey to boxing. Now, with the Cricket World Cup 1999 almost upon us, they have turned their steely gaze to the true gentleman's game.

Cricket World Cup 99 (as it is enigmatically called) is going head-to-head with the delayed *Brian Lara Cricket*, and offers a choice between accessibility and realism with sim and arcade modes. Some excellent 3D graphics and motion-captured players (the Hollioake brothers were roped in for this pleasure) are features you might expect, but the most innovative aspect is also the most surprising.

During the real-life competition this summer, players of the game will be able to log onto a dedicated Web site to download the latest pitch and weather conditions and player statistics, including injuries and form. Using this information, the game allows you to play an identical match with up-to-the-minute information, against the PC or over the Internet.

Commentary by David Gower and the legendary Richie Benaud, along with masses of camera angles including stump-cam and batter's perspective, will provide plenty of atmosphere. And if the thought of playing an innings of several hours fills you with dread, a 'last-minute' mode will allow you to jump into a game to play a tight finish: making 15 runs in two overs, say, or getting the last two men out.

With an incredible 600 moves in its motion-capture archive, and accurate locations such as Lord's and the Oval, *Cricket World Cup 99* looks to have the realism and variety that has marked previous EA Sports games.

■ **EA will have *Cricket World Cup 99* at the crease in April.**

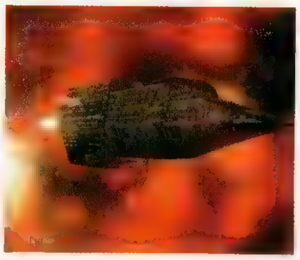
FREE PCs?

As in 'computers for free'. No, really.

Impossible? Not with the wondrous trickery of advanced capitalism in full effect. You simply apply to *www.free-pc.com* supplying an exhaustive selection of personal demographic details. They then compare you to the target groups of their advertisers. If you coincide, they supply you with a free PC with a 333MHz processor with one small problem... a bar at one side of the screen solely devoted to advertisements from their sponsors. No matter what problems may strike you, it's certainly an interesting idea... but there really is no such thing as a free lunch. Unless you're a journalist.

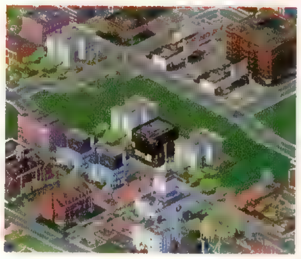
IMPERIUM GALACTICA II

Space strategy at its very finest, and best looking. **PAGE 20**



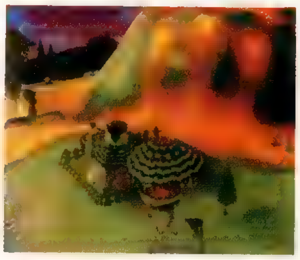
SIMCITY 3000 DEMO

Revel in our demo shame! Exclusive grovelling apology! **PAGE 23**



MILIA GAMES 1999

We report on the glitzy Milia awards, and name the victors. **PAGE 24**



Crowd reactions are apparently recorded from real life – but there are no streakers, sadly.

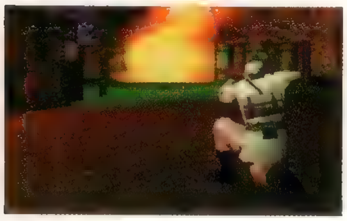
> "Excellent 3D graphics and motion-captured players... There's an incredible 600 moves in its archive."

ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS

Can it be a land-mine sim?

We have managed to completely exhaust our big book of soldier nostalgia intros, so we'll get straight on with the news...



Hidden And Dangerous seems to be akin to *Delta Force*, in that it demands you make lots of strategic decisions, but it doesn't demand that you be involved in complicated planning, à la *Rainbow Six*. Unlike both, it's set in World War II, and allows you to drive vehicles.

■ **Take 2 will give it marching orders to the shops in April.**

ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

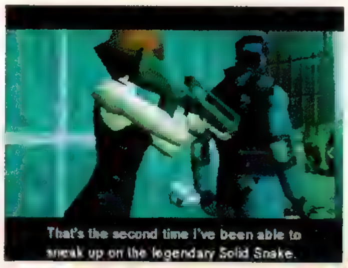
It's sneaking off the PlayStation.

Konami have recently announced that they'll be bringing what our sister magazines are describing as "The best PlayStation game ever" to our beige-coloured powerhouses, prompting a flurry of excitement. But exactly why have so many journalists whipped themselves into a dribbling frenzy over it?

Metal Gear Solid brings the sneak-'em-up genre, recently seen on the PC in *Thief*, to the masses. In true Japanese-console-game fashion, the plot is charmingly daft. You play Solid Snake, an assassin and secret agent of some note, on a one-man mission to infiltrate a terrorist base. Your weapon is silence. Your friends are shadows. Your name is unbelievably silly. But you do get to interact fully with characters and environments, as well as taking time out to duff up a few baddies.

Suspected improvements would be full 3D card support (these shots, please bear in mind, are from the PlayStation version), but bar that it's all as secretive as the game itself. We hope that the difficulty is increased for the more nimble wrists of the PC gaming fraternity. As soon as we hear anything more, rest assured, we'll let you know.

■ **Konami will let *MGS* infiltrate the shops later this year.**



That's the second time I've been able to sneak up on the legendary Solid Snake.

I bet Snake doesn't feel quite so solid when he's teetering over a pit of burning lava.

LV.
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GOBBETS

BACK TO *UNREAL*-ITY

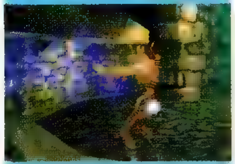
In a move no doubt intended to revive interest in *Unreal* before *Unreal Tournament* arrives, GT are to release an expansion pack. Containing a host of levels (both single- and multi-player) which didn't make it into the original game, the pack will be entitled *The Return To Na Pali*. It's not yet clear when the pack will hit the shelves, but we assume it will appear before *Tournament*, which is due in April.

VOODOO CHILDREN

The latest gossip from 3D card supremos 3Dfx is that their new cards, the Voodoo3 range, will come in three distinct flavours for different-size pockets: the 2000, 3000 and 3500. Each boasts 16Mb of SGRAM, and clock speeds varying between 143MHz and 183MHz for the different models. However, only the budget model will be available in PCI form, the others requiring AGP capability. UK prices and a release date are yet to be confirmed.

MORE HERESY

Word has also reached us of an expansion pack for *Heretic II*. Features will include deathmatch levels, along with new skins and support for custom skins; an ultra-hard mode for single-play, and the new female player model, Kiera. Raven say they are "close to releasing this bad boy". Whatever that means.



DRIVING

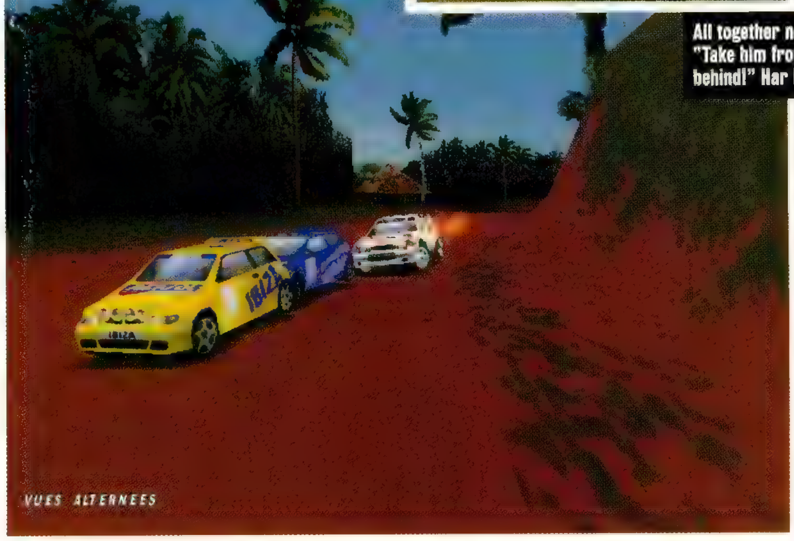
V-RALLY

Colin's latest challenger gears up for the race.

You might be forgiven for thinking that we're all console-hating fascists here in GAMER-land (apart from Jes, of course). Now and again, though, games come along which make us forget our prejudices for a while. *Resident Evil 2* is an example of this, and hard on its heels comes *V-Rally*, the long-awaited PC version of 1997's PlayStation hit.

V-Rally may struggle in 1999 due to the direct competition (and knee-trembling quality) of *Colin McRae Rally*, but recent glimpses of playable code assured us that *V-Rally* is a good match in the looks department for the mighty *Colin*. While the PlayStation version suffered slightly for its tricky handling, you can justifiably expect it to have been judiciously tweaked for the better.

With stacks of tracks and weather conditions, and a showroom-full of gravel-gobbling motor cars, you can expect *V-Rally* to provide hours of fun.



All together now: "Take him from behind!" Har har.

■ **Infogrames should have *V-Rally* at the starting line in April.**

STRATEGY

ABOMINATION

You've seen us in the shower, then?

"Killing me softly with your song," sang Roberta Flack (and more recently the Fugees). "Killing me incredibly violently with your blasphemous writhing tentacles" would be more appropriate here (though is rather more difficult to fit to the tune).

The forthcoming game from Hothouse chronicles the struggle between the player-controlled forces and The Brood; a coven of mutants. Being a real-time, squad-based strategy game, it seems to be most reminiscent of *X-COM: Apocalypse* with the horror rating raised off the top of the graph. Your team has high levels of AI too, reacting to situations realistically.

As well as an enthralling single-player game, it'll offer full Internet multi-player modes, including an on-line linked campaign for more sophisticated thrills. Full dynamic lighting of the ultraviolence should wrap up a gloriously visceral experience.

You can create your own AI routines: 'run away' is a favourite.

■ **Eidos will be releasing *Abomination* from its pit for Christmas.**

FORCE 21

A very strong gale? No.

World War III. Generally considered to be a bit of a Bad Thing. Except, of course, in our world of PC games, where the ultimate destruction of Man is a good excuse as any for some real-time strategy action. With tanks.

Coming from Red Storm Entertainment, creators of the much loved *Rainbow Six*, *Force 21* gives you a whole big box of 21st century military hardware to toy around with, including more than forty vehicles. Battles are fought in full 3D at real locations in China, Russia and Kazakhstan, making this a bit like those up-market holiday programmes, with the added bonus of large explosions.

■ Take 2 will be showing us their arsenal in July.

ACTION

SANITY

Hey kids – exploding heads! Got your attention? Good...

Spells are for wimps. Wing of bat and toe of dog? I *really* don't think so. Force manipulation? Using the power that flows through us all to lift things? Lightweights. What we really want is full-on blood-and-guts psychic powers like in that top film Scanners. Immolating your foes in a blast of mental fire, your own head exploding due to the power you're controlling. Oh yesssss. That's what we like.

Monolith are taking their Lithtech engine into a completely new direction with *Sanity*. For a start it's not a first-person shooter, with the action being viewed from an isometric perspective. It also presents psychic powers, called talents, in a more violent manner than we've seen before, with their use leading to a reduction in both health and sanity, and overuse resulting in some *very* messy consequences.

As well as a solo game, it takes an innovative approach to multi-player. In a manner reminiscent to *Magic: The Gathering*, players can trade talents between games and even combine them to create new effects. There are also 12 unique psychic paths to follow, which change your powers according to your beliefs. So, for example, a Shaman's abilities will appear considerably different from a Demonologist.

■ **Monolith will be releasing *Sanity* from the asylum in time for Christmas.**

ACTION

EVOLVA

Help arrives in the form of a bio-engineered hedgehog.

A genetically modified PC game?

For an intelligent action game, you certainly seem to be woefully underarmed. I mean... they jam constantly, only fire six shots before running out and... What? Oh, sorry. I wasn't listening properly.

Computer Artwork are working on this interesting shooter-cum-thinker. Not only does it possess sumptuously coloured graphics, it involves some rather intriguing ideas. You control a team of four bioengineered soldiers in their mission to stop a planet-eating monstrosity (like Unicron from Transformers: The Movie, we'd imagine). Despite the third-person perspective, the views of your other three comrades are displayed on screen, as in *Hired Guns*, and they "assimilate weaponry" from their foes.

While the exact meaning of this statement hasn't been elaborated upon (and could possibly just be an obscure way of saying, "You pick up power-ups") it certainly is enough to make us especially grow thinking beards to stroke thoughtfully while staring into the middle distance. Intriguing...

■ **Virgin will be releasing *Evolva* onto our planet in November.**

DISPATCHED

It's in the post? Then it should be here for Xmas.

Mmm. We like chicks on bikes.

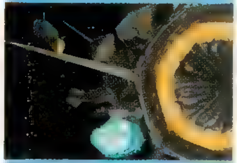
You like Star Wars? Then this may send happy signals to your mind's pleasure centres, as it seems to be based around the seminal speeder chases from Return of the Jedi. You play a heavily armed dispatch rider, mounted on a hover-bike and delivering packages in a decaying world. The third-person perspective changes to add a cinematic quality to your fights and allows you to admire how the light streams on your rider, or fawn over her intricate animation. But how will it *play*? We'll wait to find out.

■ **Rage will be delivering this by the end of the Millennium.**

GOBBETS

ON A WING AND A PRAYER

20th Century Fox announced recently that the Wing Commander film will make it into US movie theatres on 12th March, ahead of schedule. Based on the perennial PC game



series of the same name, the film should make it to our screens by early summer, along with the inevitable truckload of merchandising tat. All concerned with the film will be hoping it will be the first film-based-on-a-game to actually be any good.

3DFX LEAD THE WAY – FOR NOW

A recent report from market-watchers PC Data indicates that 72% of graphics cards sold in the last quarter of last year (October – December) were based on either Voodoo2 or Voodoo Banshee chipsets. This bodes well for 3Dfx, who are on the verge of releasing their Voodoo3 range. All five of the best-selling cards were based on 3Dfx chipsets.

YOUR FACE HERE

Those nice people at Interplay are offering gamers the chance to get their ugly (or handsome) mugs in the forthcoming space combat game *Descent 3*, as one of the pilots. All you have to do is

fill out the form at *www.interplay.com/descent3/iyf.html* and send them a digitised photograph of yourself. Lord knows how they plan to pick the winners, but it's safe to assume pulling a face won't help.

GOBBETS

DOWN, DEEPER AND DOWN

Southpeak continue their attempts to breathe life into their (hnnngh) 'video reality games' with their *20,000 Leagues: The Adventure Continues*, due to arrive late this year. They claim that most of the game's graphics were digitised from 35mm film, with the limited amount of rendered footage then tailored to look similar to that. Righto.

20000 LEAGUES

TRAVELLER: DESTINATION PC

Traveller was the original space-based pen-and-pencil RPG, and though never as famous as D&D, is highly respected among those in our midst with an excess of facial follicular growth. Fenris Wolf have managed to acquire the licence to create a game set in its highly detailed galaxy. They're tight-lipped on the game, but we, the impetuous fools that we are, predict the involvement of space-ships at some point.

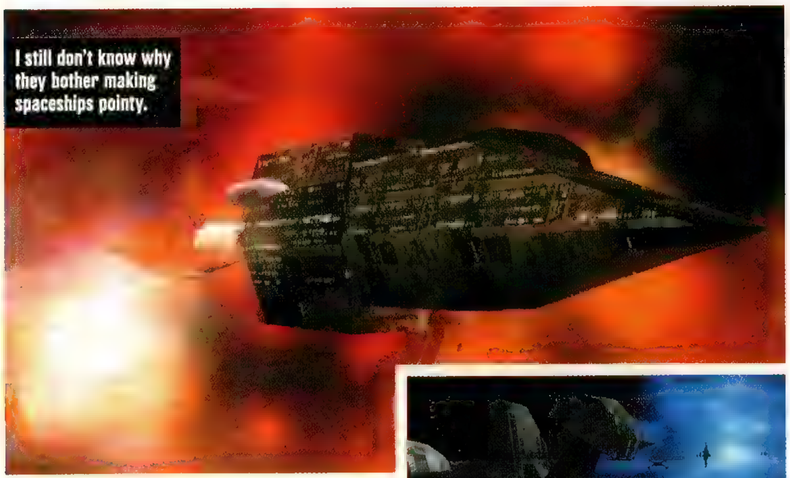
DUKE 4 CELLULOID

Our favourite pseudo-sexist, mouthy gun-toting fellow (bar Matt, of course) still seems set for cinematic immortality. The film, based on his violent antics, is scheduled to begin production in five months' time. It's being produced by game-to-film veteran Lawrence Kasanoff, who previously worked on Mortal Kombat and T2. The plot is said to be based around someone messing around with Duke's strippers – Shakespeare would die of jealousy.

STRATEGY

IMPERIUM GALACTICA II

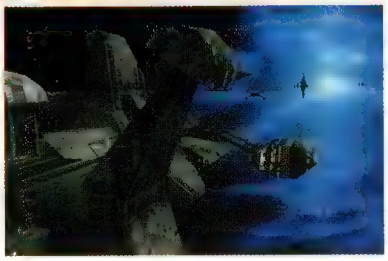
Join the battle against the Cylons... erm... that's 'Battlestar', isn't it?



I still don't know why they bother making spaceships pointy.

It's a bit odd, really. The original *Imperium Galactica* (PCG 47, 84%) was likened variously to *SimCity 2000*, *Civ II* and *C&C*. And now that those three games are all receiving sequels and/or updates this year, along comes *Imperium Galactica II* to crash the party and chat up all the girls.

For *IG II* is looking to be another cracking sequel, having obviously gone under the knife for some serious cosmetic enhancements. With the game split between planet-bound colonisation and combat either in space or on planets, there'll clearly be plenty to keep strategy fans of all preferences happy.



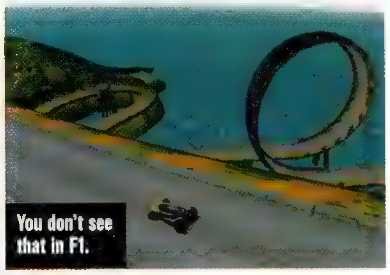
The premise is simple: establish colonies in space, crush your enemies with customisable ships, undermine them with devious subterfuge and outclass them with your command of technology. With 8 types of civilisation, 7 ships types for each, a 100-planet campaign and 150 inventions to research, *Imperium Galactica II* looks set to take on the big strategy boys at their own game.

"Um, captain... we may have a problem."

- **GT should be establishing *IG II* on a planet near you in May.**

DRIVING

THRUST, TWIST AND TURN



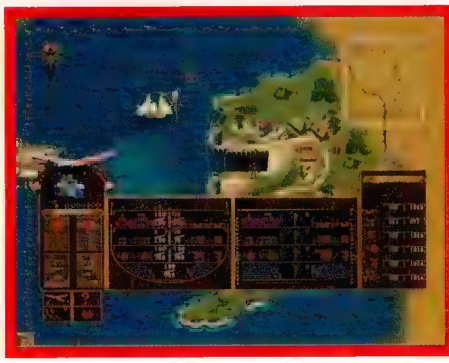
You don't see that in F1.

The follow-up to 'Twist & Shout'.

If you look back to the beginning of Geoff Crammond's career, you'll find *Revs*. But if you look a little bit later than that, you'll come across *Stunt Car Racer*, which is still one of the most surreal and compulsive racers ever. So we opened a bottle of Champagne to celebrate the news of this, essentially a *Stunt Car Racer* for the Nineties.

In *Thrust, Twist And Turn* you race your sturdy automobile around dangerously suspended stunt courses, packed full of petrifying dives, nerve-wracking loops and all the things that would make the course more suitable for a rollercoaster than a race-track. It wisely chooses not to replicate *Stunt Car Racer's* distinctive Trivial-Pursuit-wedges as cars though. Additions to the formula include weaponry to send opponents hurtling floorwards, which seems mind-bogglingly dangerous to us. Nutters.

- **Take 2 will be revving up its engine for its May release.**

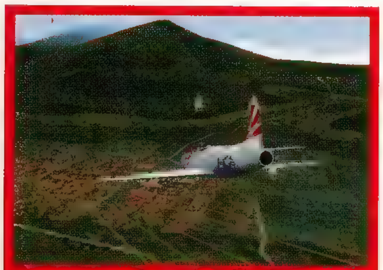


CORSAIRS

Yo ho ho, and a bottle of rum, etc.

An interesting fact: piracy is one of the two crimes that still carries a death penalty in Britain. Intro over. Release the info-sharks, captain. This is a real-time strategy game, with you at the head of a privateer fleet and ravishing the Caribbean. In fact one of the things that separates this from most games of its sort (for example, the ageing *Pirate Gold*) is that it's all based on realistic maps of that legendary area. Boarding actions are also playable, with up to thirty characters rattling their cutlasses.

- **Microids will be sailing the good ship *Corsairs* into open waters in August.**



MIG ALLEY

Wouldn't like to meet *that* down a dark alley.

Just when you thought all possible avenues of planes fighting each other had been explored, along comes Rowan with *MiG Alley*. The early 1950s saw the jet engine assume dominance in the field of aerial combat, and the Korean War was the first time the fearsome MiG was pitted against American fighters.

Taking the side of the Allies, you can enter the conflict at three levels: quick-start missions, mini-campaigns and the massive Spring Campaign. You can plan and customise any aspect of missions, and take any level of responsibility you like.

The graphics engine has been completely rebuilt, to allow for more diverse and much bigger landscapes, and there are a full array of historically accurate weapons.

■ **Empire will let *MiG* loose in April.**

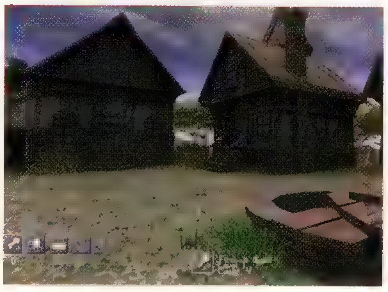
ROLE-PLAYING

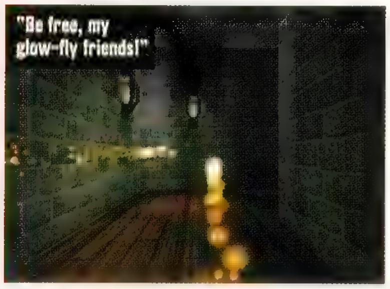
SORCERY

For my next trick, I'll need a volunteer.

We like lots of concrete information here at PC GAMER – unfortunately, we've not been getting much about what is tentatively being called *Sorcery*. That said, we felt we just had to show you these screenshots that have been floating around of late, posted by developers Starbreeze.

One of the most graphically impressive games currently in development, *Sorcery* already includes all the currently fashionable tweaks modern graphics have to offer. Volumetric, coloured lighting, dynamic shadows and true curved surfaces might lead you to think that *Sorcery* is some kind of *Quake*-contender, but Starbreeze are adamant that it is a "first-person RPG".





"Be free, my glow-fly friends!"

These days, the term RPG means very little, but you can rest assured that the working title means what it says: there will be lots of magic and flashy magical effects. We'll be taking a closer look when the veil of secrecy is removed. Until then, drool at these delicious shots.

■ **Gremlin are publishing – no release date has been announced yet, but we imagine Christmas is a fairly safe bet.**

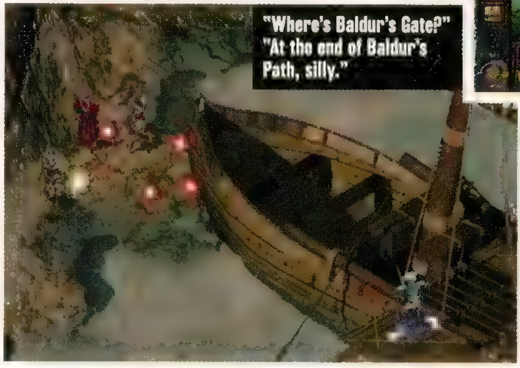
ROLE-PLAYING

BALDUR'S GATE: TALES OF THE SWORD COAST

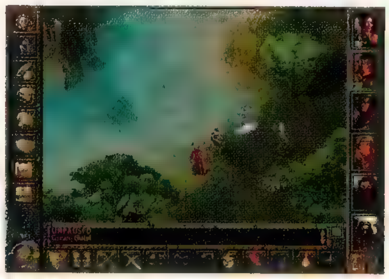
I think we've run out of beard jokes.

Since its release over Christmas, *Baldur's Gate* has given many weeks of role-playing happiness to goblin-lovers the world over. The game's structure has left it ripe for the expanding, and it is no surprise to learn that Black Isle (Interplay's RPG division) have nearly finished work on *Tales Of The Sword Coast*, an expansion pack which will broaden *BG*'s already-enormous world.

But rather than taking the traditional route of adding chapters *after* completion of the main game, *TSC* will weave new areas and quests into the fabric of the existing game. According to Black Isle, follow-up quests would not work due to the outcome of the main quest in *Baldur's Gate*... those of you who have completed it will know what they are talking about.



"Where's Baldur's Gate?" "At the end of Baldur's Path, silly."



The expansion pack should allow characters to gain a couple of extra levels than the experience cap in the main game allows, so expect a good deal more adventuring, questing and fighting. Oh, and there's a full-on sequel slated for later this year...

■ **Interplay will read us their *Tales Of The Sword Coast* in April.**

GOBBETS

HOP ON THE PIII BANDWAGON

At the official unveiling of the Pentium III processor in San Jose in February, games developers were extremely keen to demonstrate how their latest offspring were being prepared to utilise the new technology. Among them were THQ with *International Rally Championship* and *Sinistar Unleashed*; Interplay with *Descent 3* and *Messiah*; Delphine with *Darkstone*; and Sierra FX with *Babylon 5 Space Combat Simulator*. They'll have forgotten all about it in a few months.

MORE BYTES PER BUCK

Memorex are releasing the first writable CD-R with a bulging 700Mb capacity, a whole extra 50Mb for you to store files on (though still only one quarter of the full trouser-dirtyingly massive 2.7 gigabyte full install of *Baldur's Gate*). At only a slight increase in price it could be economical for anyone with intensive storage demands. My God. We're turning into PC Review.

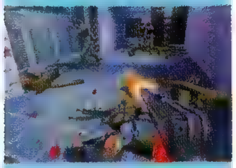
NANANANANANA

Batman! Ubi Soft have signed the rights with Warner Bros to develop a game of the stylishly formed animated series of the Dark Knight of Gotham. Or Batman, to me and you. All formats are supposedly included in the deal, so while no specific PC version has yet been announced, we should see some caped-crusader action soon.

GOBBETS

SHOGO-A-GO-GO

Lithtech have released all the tools they used to craft their eponymous engine, last seen in *Blood 2*. This would seem to be just about everything required to manipulate the monster-mecha game *Shogo* (Game of the Month in our Christmas issue) into whatever strange and wondrous variant you choose, from just designing your own levels to adding features that should have been in the original game. Like Optimus Prime. Or Megatron. You can find everything that's required at: *http://www.lithtech.com/mods/*



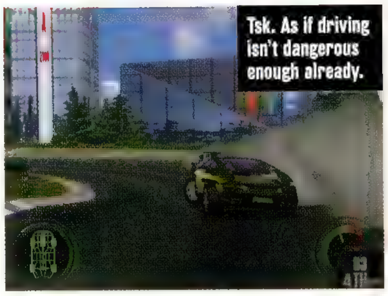
DRIVING

ROAD WARS

My money's on the M4.

The quest to transfer Mad Max to the computer screen has been going on since humanity evolved the opposable thumb (and, yes, early on the prime cause of failure was that neither Mad Max nor computers had been invented). The closest anyone's come is the flawed pleasures of *Carmageddon* (with the forthcoming *Redline* seeming ripe with possibility).

But there's a new contender welding army-surplus machine guns to its car roof in preparation for wheeled conflict. In *Road Wars* you can customise your protagonist by selecting 12 different character and car combinations, then compete in a progressive season race, where you upgrade your deathmobile with race winnings. So you can kill even more people. Presumably.



Tsk. As if driving isn't dangerous enough already.

■ Intense Entertainment will be suffering road rage in April.

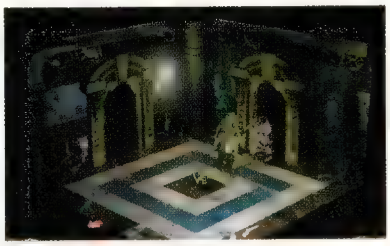
ROLE-PLAYING

CLANS

We got family.

I trust you've all read the *Planescape: Torment* article by now? So you know about its original approach? *Clans* is the complete opposite of that, putting you in a quest to slay (yawn) a demon. Who has chosen to live in a dungeon. From what we've seen so far, it looks like an ultra-posh version of *Gauntlet*, featuring a choice of four characters fighting for the survival of their clan.

■ Strategy First will be unsheathing their swords come April.



PC CD ACCOLADE DOWNLOAD THE DEMO NOW: www.redline2066.com
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YOUR CITIZENS ARE ANGRY

SimCity demo nightmare!

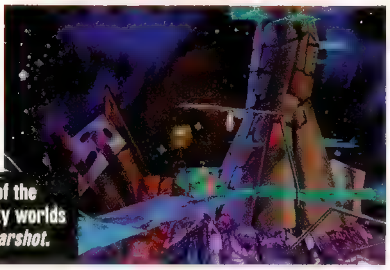
We were feeling rather smug last month, having brought you an entire disc of *Sim* gubbins headed up by an exclusive demo of *SimCity 3000*. Imagine our horror and embarrassment to discover that the demo was time-limited, meaning it wouldn't work if you played it any time after 5th February.

We'd like to apologise and blame developers Maxis for this total cock-up (a full letter of explanation from Maxis will appear in next month's PC GAMER). For now, though, all you have to do is turn back your Windows clock to before 5th February (but after 6th January). The demo should then work fine, happy in the knowledge it is still January. Don't forget to turn it back afterwards, though, or you'll forget about all the fun to be had on New Year's Eve, and your PC won't even remember to crash properly. Oh, and, erm... we're very sorry.

ARCADE

STARSHOT: SPACE CIRCUS FEVER

Take four random words, a colon, and hey presto!


One of the wacky worlds of *Starshot*.

Frankly, we're getting a bit tired of all these circus simulators. But seriously folks... *Starshot: Space Circus Fever* is a colourful platformer keen to repeat its N64 success in the competitive PC arena. That ludicrous title is surprisingly apt, as you play the diminutive juggler Starshot and must quest to save your friends and your livelihood, the Space Circus, from the baddies in the Virtua Circus.

You'll need to jump, run, slide, swim, climb and interact with other characters in a true *Mario* style on your journey through a variety of fully three-dimensional worlds, which have a cartoony look and feel. Starshot has the ability to shoot and control little comets to defeat his enemies, and also has the assistance of a handful of other characters including a robot rocket.

Platform games aren't traditionally successful on the PC, but *Starshot* may possess just enough weirdness to tempt us over to the dark side.

■ **Infogrames will be ringmasters when *Starshot* appears on 19th March.**

GOBBETS

IF MOUSE-CLICK BE THE FOOD OF LOVE...

The world of *Ultima Online* took a more romantic turn over the Valentine weekend, providing a welcome relief from violent conflict and hilarious language barriers. Bloodstained yet amorous adventurers were given the opportunity of exchanging gifts of love, such as flutes of champagne, chocolate and Valentine's cards. The cynics at GAMER would almost certainly use such an opportunity to sneak behind a love-drunk fool and smite them mightily, then run off with their intended.

The champagne and thy love keep me warm!

LEAD?
REDLINE
IN 2066 NOBODY RUNS UNLEADED

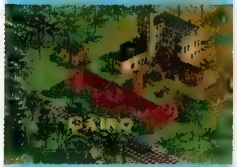
GOBBETS

GAMES FOR LOOSE CHANGE

A game for £2.99? Surely those days are gone. But no… for the price of a pint and a couple of bags of Walkers, you can soon buy a sparkly disc from the Pocket Price range. Titles include *Pin Bowling Fever, Bugs, Chess Champ, Crazy Drake, Epsilon, Football Masters, Sport, Grand Prix Racing, Half-Life, Juggernaut Corps, Kart Racer, Lamborghini American Challenge, Mission Chameleon, Pro Cycling 98, Rescue, Snowboard Racer, Sports Superbike, Thunder Offshore, Wingstar* and *World Wide Rally*. There was an obvious lie in there to see if you were paying attention.

RUNAWAY TRAIN

Coming hot on the heels of news that *Railroad Tycoon*'s sales have topped the 500,000 mark, PopTop have announced that an expansion pack is in the pipeline. *RTII: The Second Century* should be available here by early summer, and will be published by GOD. Not our Lord in heaven, you understand, but the publishers GOD.



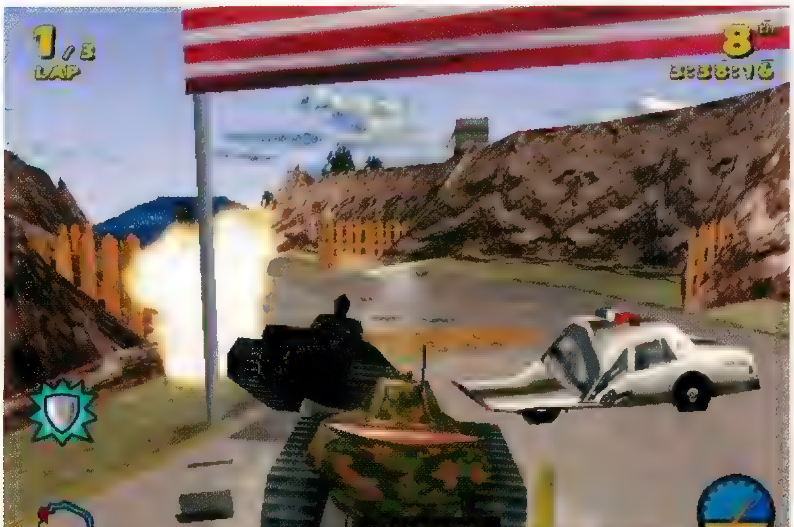
NOT NOXIOUS

Or at least probably not, given Westwood's high standard of output. *Nox* is the odd title of their new game, to be released towards the end of the year. It marks the start of a new range of games, all based in a complicated world of danger, magic and intrigue. *Nox*, being touted as an action/RPG, uses a top-down viewpoint and features a multitude of spell types and levels, as well as true line of sight to make combat that little bit trickier. We'll keep you informed.

DRIVING

TANK RACER

Like *Viper Racing*. Without snakes.



Note the neatly flattened cop car (above): we've always wanted to do that.

If you make a long list of vehicles that you can imagine being in a speed-based competition, Ferrari and F1 cars would rest near the top. Towards the foot of the table, alongside unicycles and pogo-sticks, would be tanks. Because, if we're being polite, hurling themselves along at extreme velocities isn't *really* among their defining characteristics.

The gentlefolk at Ghost Ghost (the action-game side of Simis) don't care, and are well on the way to completing this novelty driving game. To make it more speedy, the only tank qualities that remain are the rotating turrets, their aura of complete invincibility, and bloody great tracks. During the race you plough over scenery, innocent cars and wildlife, while firing your rotating cannon at your fellow armoured metal fiends to knock them slightly off course.

It all looks rather nice, as you can see, but novelty is what counts in our book. And in the wake of *Speedbusters*, any unusual racing games are welcome here at GAMER.

We're holding out for *Wheelbarrow Race Grand Prix.*

■ **Grolier Interactive will release *Tank Racer* in time for Easter.**

SPECIAL REPORT

Wargasm won 'Best Action Game' – but what about *Half-Life*?

MILIA D'OR 99

Wargasm: best action game of the year. Official.

Award ceremonies. Fun for the industry, because of all the back slapping. And quite good fun for the rest of us too. But how many of you have defining childhood memories of shouting, "Wrong, wrong, wrong!" when Annie Lennox gained another Brit award, eh? I'll bet it's quite a few. Certainly more than three.

Anyway, the industry gathered in Cannes for Milia '99, and between having a good nose at all the new games, voted for who should receive the coveted Award d'Or. The results, then.

Action: ***Wargasm* (PC)**
Adventure: ***Zelda 64* (N64)**
Strategy: ***Populous: The Beginning* (PC)**
Simulation: ***Gran Turismo* (PlayStation)**
Most Impressive Gameplay: ***Zelda 64***
Hottest Multi-Player: ***Starcraft* (PC)**
People's Choice Award: ***Gran Turismo***

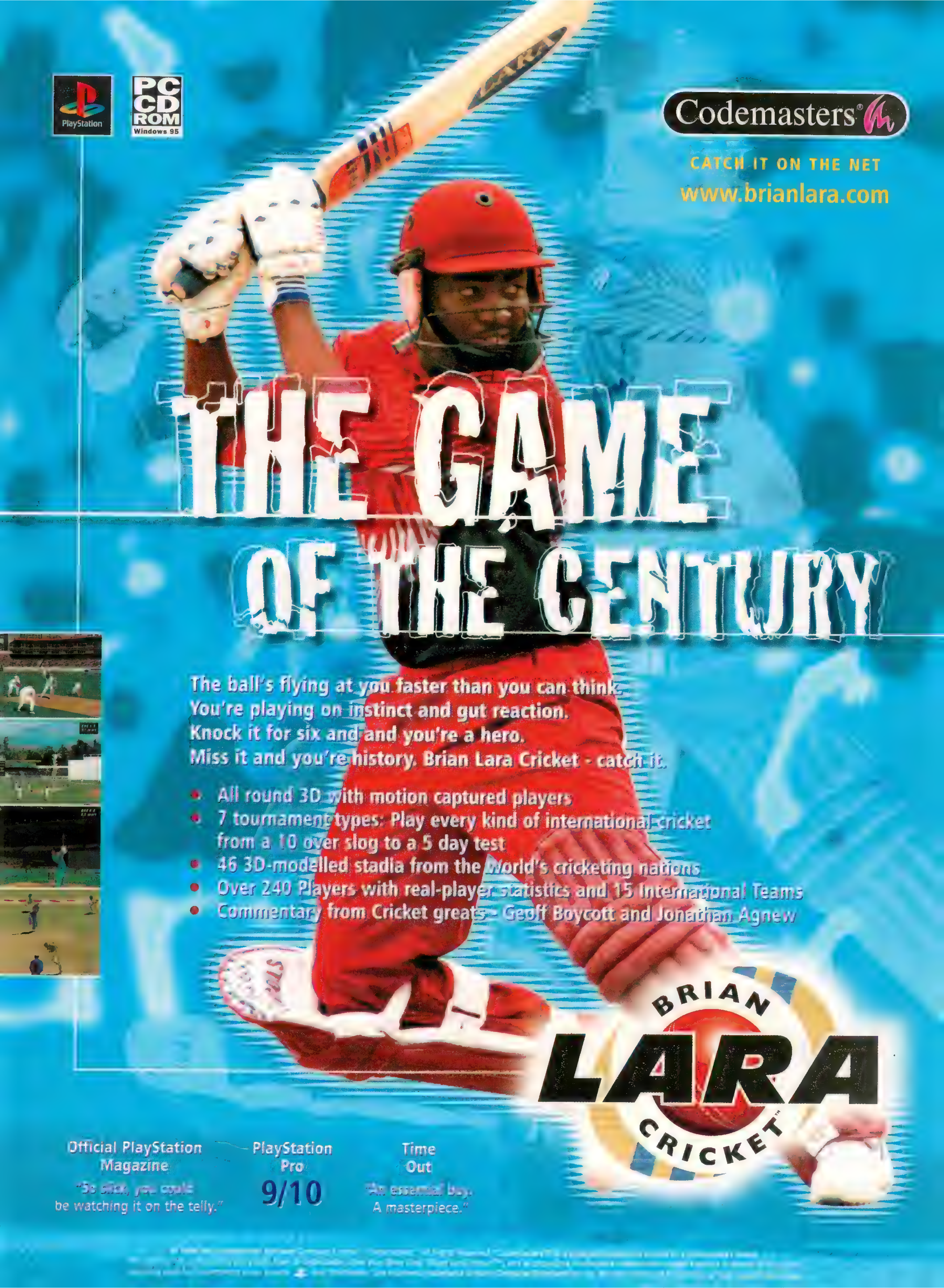
So it's a generally good, if rather unusual, showing for PC games. But as much as we love *Wargasm*, *Populous 3* and *Starcraft*, we can't but help feeling some stronger candidates have been overlooked. Our typing fingers long to write the next Top 100…

EVERYTHING MUST GO

Free stuff. What more can we say?

The bods at Electronics Arts gave us a call the other day. "Games," they said. "We've got so many we just don't know what to do with them. Could you use them?" We told them to send them over and now we have ten (count 'em!) copies of *Alpha Centauri* to give away, as well as ten 'Six of the Best' compilations, which includes the magnificent beauty of *Dungeon Keeper*. To gain the loot, simply scribble the answer to the following question on some piece of stationery and send it to the "Actually the new album's not much cop" competition at the usual address.

■ **The question? What's the nearest star to Earth (apart from the Sun, obviously)?**



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PlayStation Pro
9/10

Time Out
"An essential buy. A masterpiece."

CONSOLE YOURSELF

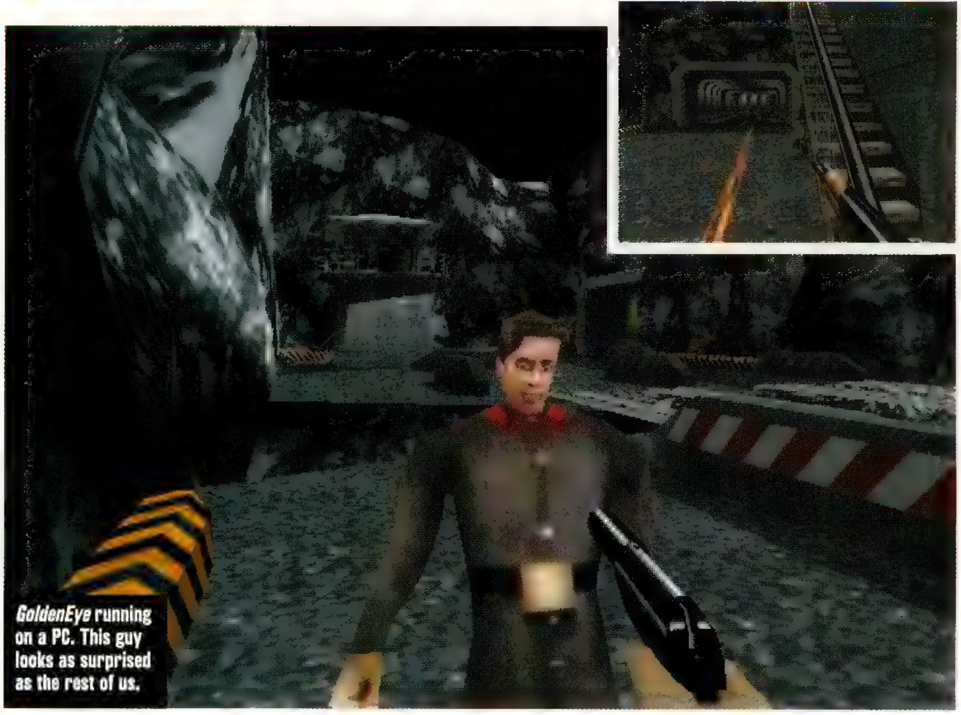
SPECIAL REPORT

The latest breakthrough in emulation brings Mario, 007 and Link to your PC. (Highly illegal, natch.)

By MATTHEW PIERCE

THE Ultra64 High Level Emulator is an incredible program. Less than 1Mb in size, it achieves nothing less than the complete emulation of Nintendo's flagship N64 console on your PC. Naturally, you need the games (ROMs) to use it with, but for those who're prepared to explore the more clandestine underbelly of the Web-trawling Warez sites, scouring emulation message boards, and not giving up after experiencing hundreds of broken links, they're out there for the taking.

Don't underestimate the hard work involved locating, downloading, and (in some cases) fixing the ROMs before UltraHLE will run them; the rewards, however, are great. *Mario 64*, *GoldenEye*, *Waverace*, *Starfox*, and even *The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* are all compatible – and while you may need a behemoth machine to appreciate *Zelda* or *GoldenEye* at anything approaching a reasonable frame rate, most games are certainly playable – the 1024x768 version of *Mario 64* being the jewel in UltraHLE's crown.



GoldenEye running on a PC. This guy looks as surprised as the rest of us.

Incredibly, considering its current prevalence on the Web, the emulator was only available for download for *four hours* – a period in which every emulation fan in the world appeared to have been using their modems. But for every emulator released, there is always the question of legality. And in UltraHLE's case, there could be a real and very serious problem.

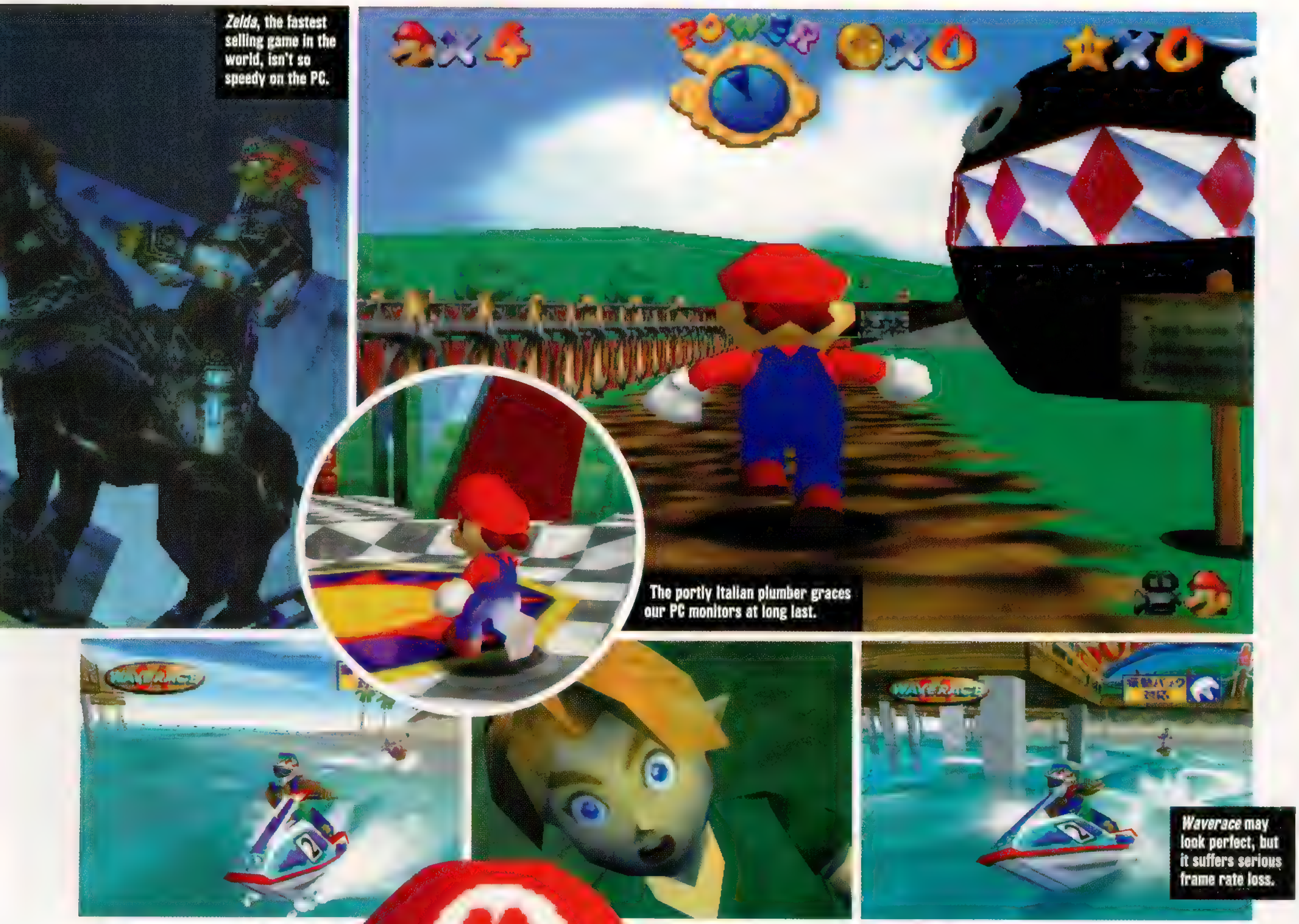
"The 1024x768 version of *Mario 64* is the jewel in UltraHLE's crown."

Nintendo believe they have a case against the two programmers – known only by their pseudonyms Epsilon and RealityMan. And whereas the company has previously satisfied itself by only shutting down sites that distribute ROMs rather than the emulators themselves, Nintendo are currently deciding whether to file a law suit against them. The pair, unsurprisingly, aren't keen to reveal their real names.

Nintendo's behaviour – although seen as OTT by much of the emulation community – is perfectly understandable. Having to fight for sales against Sony's PlayStation, the last thing the company needs is for their key games to be made available on the PC format. Nintendo need their biggest titles to promote console sales, and youngsters who could download new games for free and play them on a PC may well have their purchasing decisions altered by the experience.

This is nothing new, though. The world of emulation has always been a risky business – a developmental genre in which major achievements are greeted with joyous rapture by an ever-growing fanbase, and considered highly immoral accomplishments by a similarly large number. Releasing copyright software for free download is obviously an infringement of the original manufacturers' rights, and disclaimers accompanying the programs typically state that to use the ROMs, you have to own the original arcade or console game first.

The programmers of UltraHLE included just such a disclaimer with the emulator. But for Nintendo, it's not as simple as that. A spokesperson for the company, Beth Llewelyn,



Zelda, the fastest selling game in the world, isn't so speedy on the PC.

The portly Italian plumber graces our PC monitors at long last.

Waverace may look perfect, but it suffers serious frame rate loss.

was recently quoted as saying, "Emulators such as this are illegal. [The programmers] obviously had to circumvent our security chip. It promotes continued piracy."

Epsilon and RealityMan hit back: "We used publicly available information in the creation of this software and only emulated core processor technology." They also deny having any knowledge of the security measures which Llewelyn alludes to.

Whether Nintendo have a case, and the proliferation of emulators such as UltraHLE can be prevented in the courts, is a point that appears to have no clear legal precedent. Their rivals Sony are currently fighting a court case against Connectix – the manufacturers of a commercial PlayStation emulator for the Mac. There's a long way to go, but it appears the first round has gone to the underdog, with the San Franciscan judge rejecting Sony's request to block the product's release. And with the planned release of an emulator called Bleem on the Internet (purportedly the most impressive PlayStation emulator for the PC), the next few months could see Sony becoming a regular feature in the courts.

From inauspicious beginnings, that involved emulating 20-year-old arcade games and now-defunct formats, it appears that the world of emulation has finally caught up with today's console technology. The authors of well-established programs such as MAME (Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator), RAGE (Real Arcade Game Emulator), RAINE (Rainbow Islands Emulator), Callus and Retrocade had always busied themselves with the task of perfectly recreating hundreds of old-school classics – from *Space Invaders* and *Ghosts And Goblins* to *Operation Wolf*. Meanwhile, Epsilon and RealityMan were obviously toiling away to create the most impressive emulator we've ever seen – and the first to successfully reproduce the quality of cutting-edge console titles.

To many of the fans the fact that emulation is illegal is clearly of little or no concern – they see no harm in being able to play almost perfect copies of arcade and console games on their PCs. Indeed, one group is threatening to boycott Nintendo's future products if the company chooses to file a lawsuit against the two programmers responsible.

But as hard as it is to justify releasing the UltraHLE against Nintendo's wishes, there's no doubt that as a showcase for what your PII 400 is capable of it's as impressive as any new game; clearly the people involved in its conception are a supremely talented bunch. Whether they get what they deserve (a highly paid job, or 20 years doing time), rather depends on your own opinion.

To find out more about the emulation scene, point your Web browser at: *http://www.davesclassics.com*

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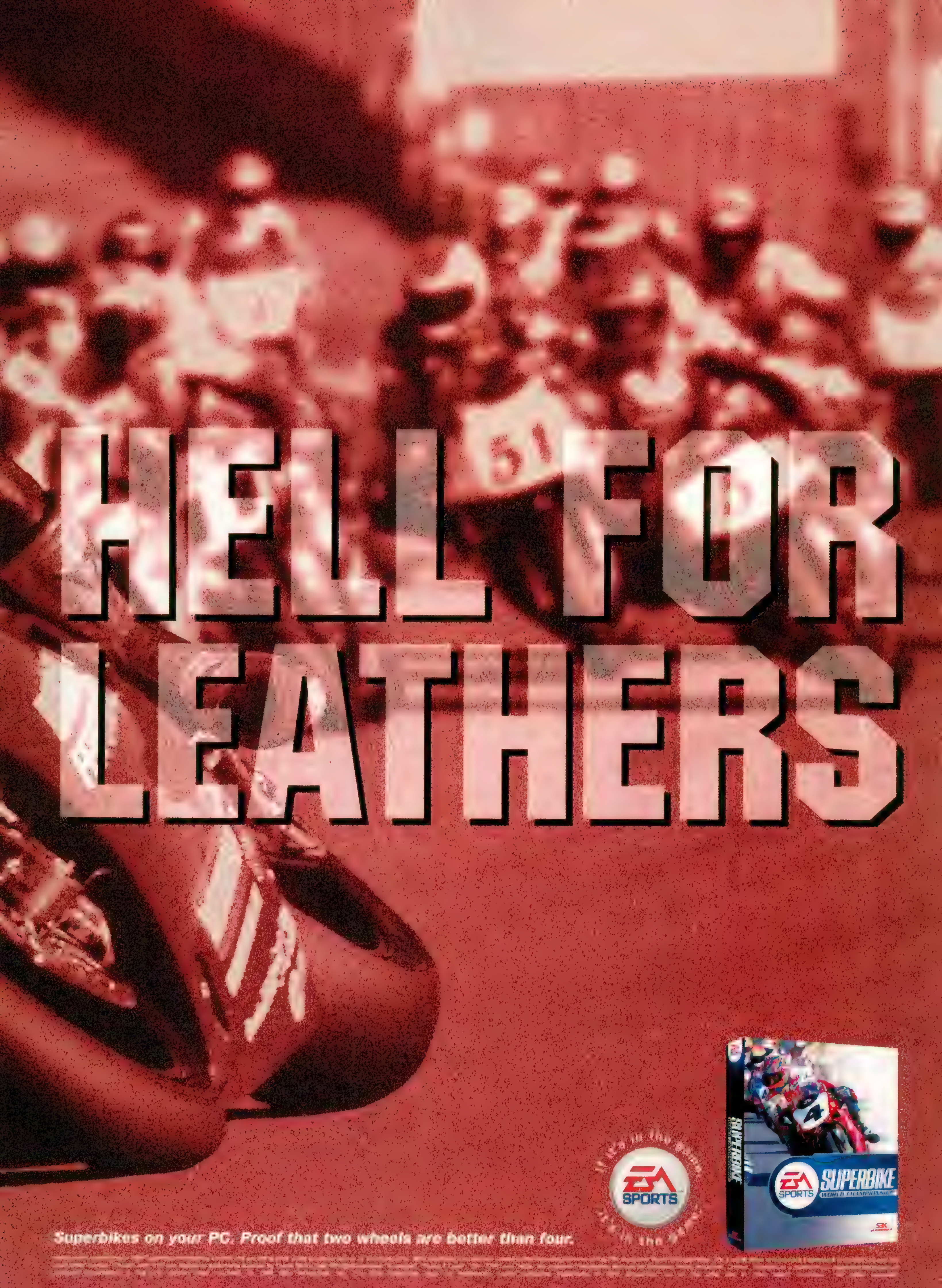
HELL FOR LEATHERS
51
If it's in the game, it's in the game.
EA SPORTS
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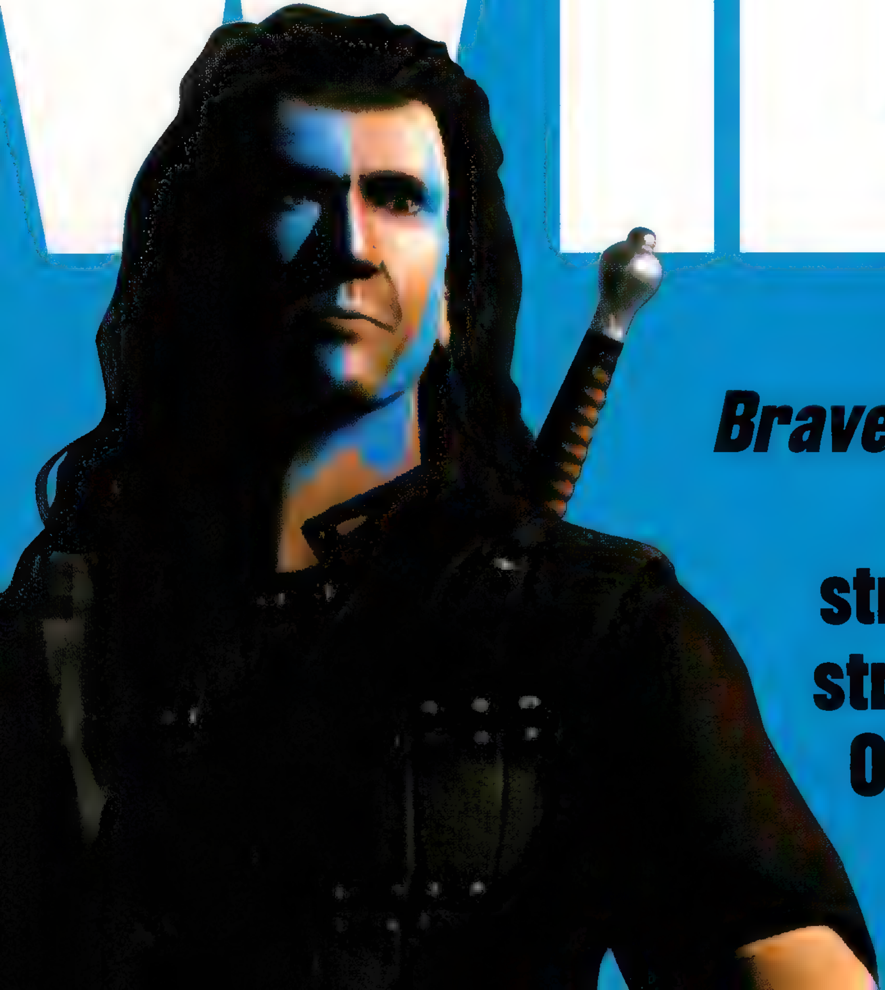
SBK

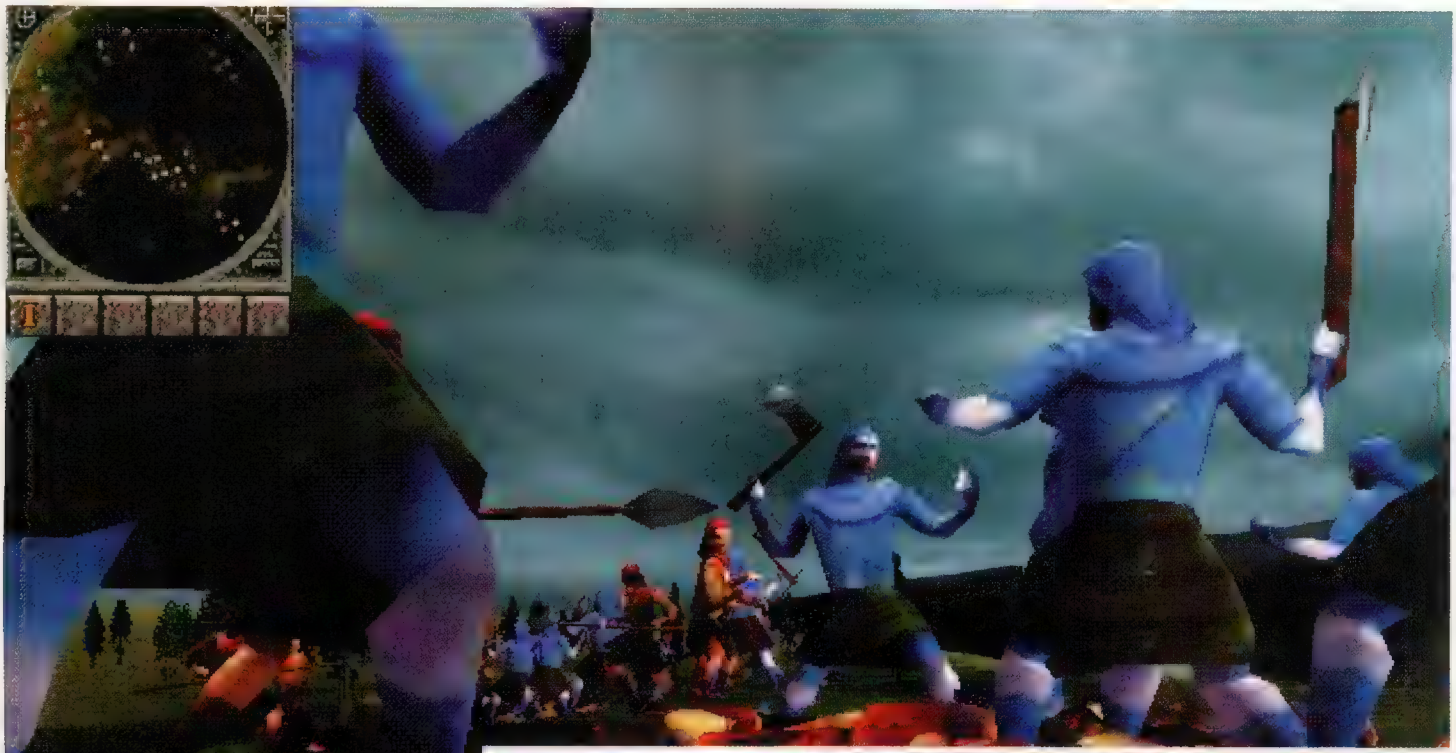
Superbikes on your PC. Proof that two wheels are better than four.

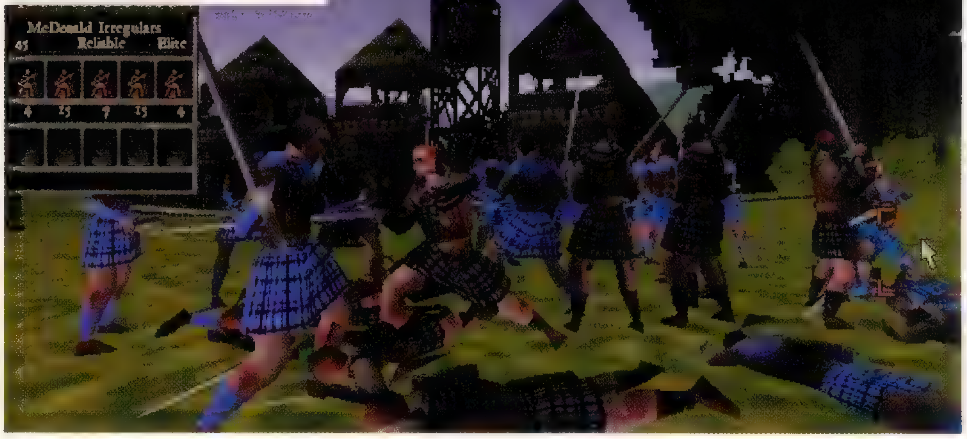
FREE WILLY



Like Kinder Surprise, *Braveheart* has three things in one. *C&C* real-time strategy, *Civ* turn-based strategy *and* Mel Gibson. Oh my, I think I'm going to explode.

By MARK DONALD





Red Lemon's Glasgow base provides them with ample opportunity to research the fight scenes.

Upon Culloden field, site of the highlanders final defeat by the English, there stands a solitary gravestone marking the spot where the flower of Clan Donald fell to redcoat musket-fire. Fortunately for this feature my forefather was either loitering at the back and legged it at the first sign of trouble, or took the precaution of banking his seed with some fecund little strumpet beforehand. Thus he could charge full tilt to his doom, secure in the knowledge that a few hundred years down the blood line I'd pop up, like a tasty piece of toast, to report on Red Lemon, the developers who are to immortalise my ancestors deeds on the PC*.

Few who have watched the film could fail to be moved by the impassioned scenes of full-blooded slaughter that festooned Mel's medieval masterpiece, and only the clinically dead didn't nod their heads appreciatively at brave Willie Wallace's delicate handling of the future English queen (the origin of the term diplomatic baggage).

But rather than be constrained by the limits of the movie, Red Lemon are merely using it as an inspirational touchstone en-route to producing a potentially genre-busting game that should appeal to both sides of a PC gamer's nature: the destructive and the creative.

The urge to destroy is catered for by a real-time strategy component more ambitious and believable than anything we've seen yet. But, BUT better even than that, Red Lemon are linking the battles to a compelling system of resource management (the creative bit). This section enables you to control and expand your population, to plan and build towns and fortifications and to extend your territorial and political influence against rival clans, to increase your chances of victory in the fight sequences. The outcome of every battle and skirmish, meanwhile, has knock-on effects on your strategic manoeuvrings. (See the 'Dream Sequence' boxout over the page.)

For years we've been waiting for someone to bring us the holy grail of *C&C*-style combat combined with *Civ*-deep strategy to create the ultimate game, no one has even come close. *Braveheart* looks like the best bet yet, allow me to explain further...

Post *Half-Life*, it's no longer enough to string a load of maps, wads or puds through some tacky FMV clips, shrink wrap it and call it a game. Immersive story-line and character motivation is all, and that applies as much to strategy games as to first-person shooters.

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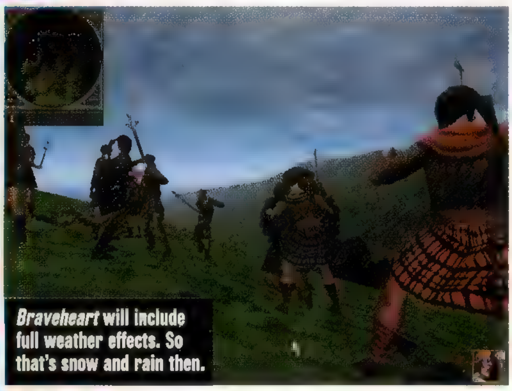

Braveheart will include full weather effects. So that's snow and rain then.

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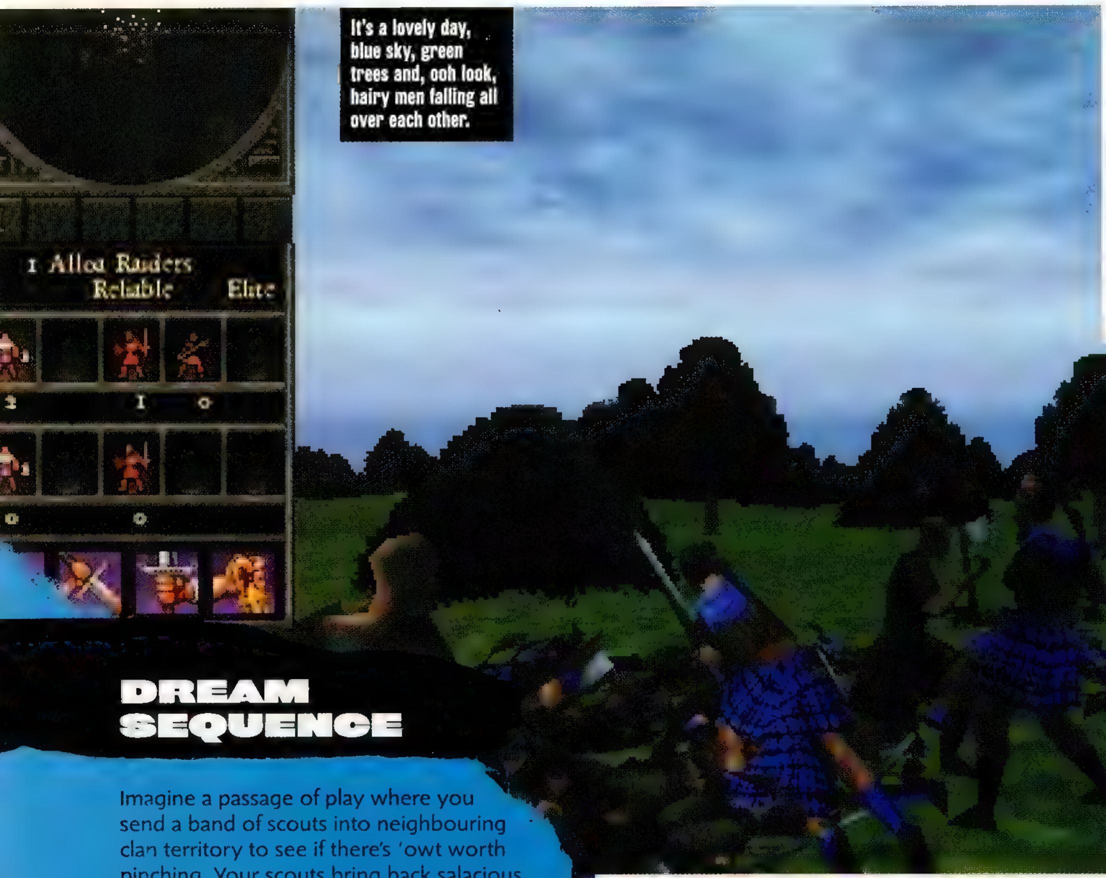
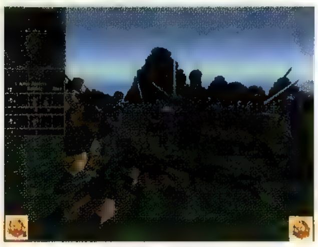
*Okay, so the adventures of William Wallace happened more than four hundred years before Culloden, but Highland battle tactics were just the same



It's a lovely day, blue sky, green trees and, ooh look, hairy men falling all over each other.



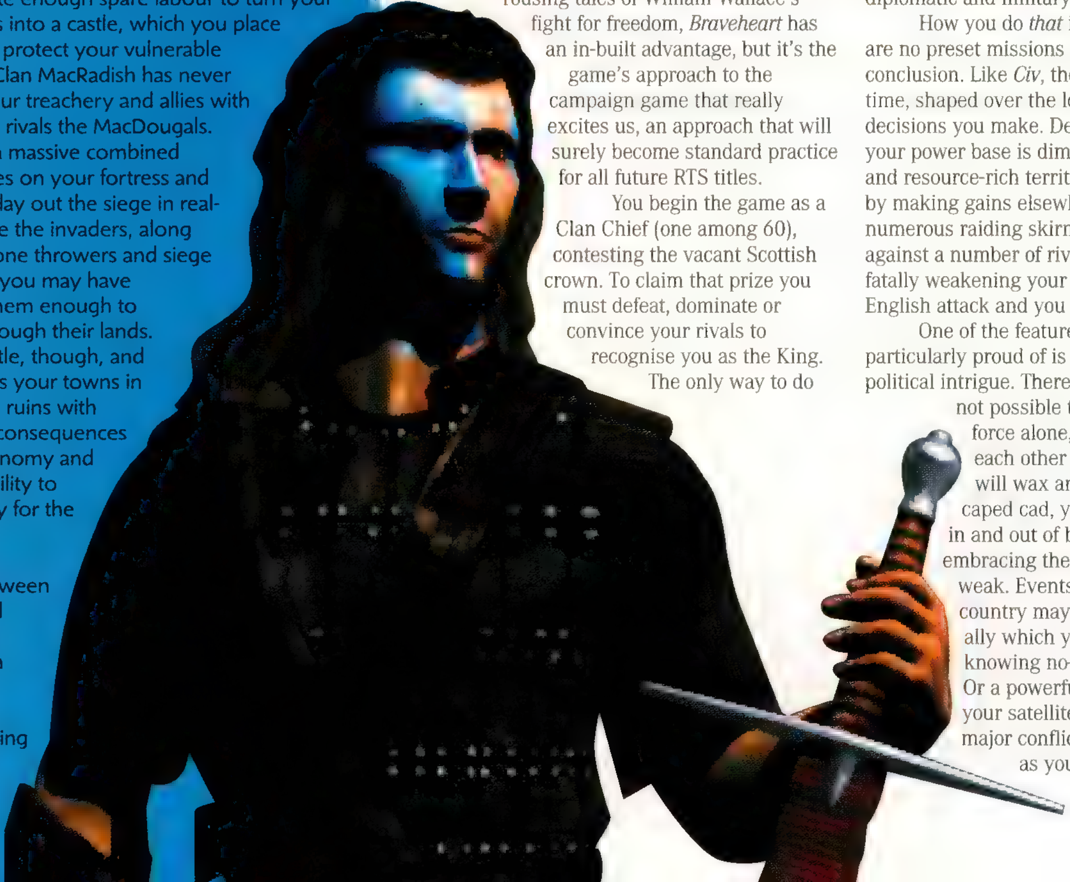
DREAM SEQUENCE

Imagine a passage of play where you send a band of scouts into neighbouring clan territory to see if there's 'owt worth pinching. Your scouts bring back salacious details of a juicy stone quarry, perfect for all your castle building needs. You must have it, and, on the pretext of recovering rogue sheep, you send in a war party to seize the asset – playing out the massacre of unprepared rock artisans in real-time.

Back in the strategic section, you move quickly to exploit your ill-gotten gains. Workers are piled into the stone trade while more warriors are assigned to protect them from enemy reprisals. Over time, your far-sighted breeding policies create enough spare labour to turn your rubble riches into a castle, which you place where it can protect your vulnerable border. But Clan MacRadish has never forgotten your treachery and allies with your ancient rivals the MacDougals.

Soon a massive combined force marches on your fortress and you get to play out the siege in real-time. Repulse the invaders, along with their stone throwers and siege towers, and you may have weakened them enough to rampage through their lands. Lose the battle, though, and you'll witness your towns in smouldering ruins with devastating consequences for your economy and thus your ability to raise an army for the next fight.

It's this interplay between real-time and turn-based events which makes *Braveheart* such an exciting prospect.



Borrowing from history and the rousing tales of William Wallace's fight for freedom, *Braveheart* has an in-built advantage, but it's the game's approach to the campaign game that really excites us, an approach that will surely become standard practice for all future RTS titles.

You begin the game as a Clan Chief (one among 60), contesting the vacant Scottish crown. To claim that prize you must defeat, dominate or convince your rivals to recognise you as the King. The only way to do that is to make your clan the irresistible economic, diplomatic and military power in Scotland.

How you do *that* is entirely up to you. There are no preset missions leading to an inevitable conclusion. Like *Civ*, the campaign is different every time, shaped over the long term by the strategic decisions you make. Defeat in one battle may mean your power base is diminished by the loss of men and resource-rich territory, but you can still recover by making gains elsewhere. Equally, you may win numerous raiding skirmishes for short-term gain against a number of rival clans, but at the cost of fatally weakening your diplomatic position when the English attack and you suddenly need some allies.

One of the features Red Lemon are particularly proud of is the game's undercurrent of political intrigue. There are so many clans that it's not possible to crush them all by brute force alone, so playing them off against each other is essential. Clan fortunes will wax and wane over time, so, like a caped cad, you'll be constantly hopping in and out of bed with different partners, embracing the powerful and discarding the weak. Events in a different part of the country may suddenly isolate a long term ally which you then decide to plunder knowing no-one else will help them out. Or a powerful clan may march on one of your satellite states bringing you into major conflict sooner than you planned as you try to prop up a small but useful friend. Every action causes political ripples elsewhere; form a new alliance with a clan and you may find their enemies become your enemies. The mentality of individual clans plays a part too. Some will bear grudges for years to come, while others admire a slick bit of deviousness and skulduggery.

At the throbbing strategic hub of *Braveheart* are the management screens where you decide how best to manipulate the world around you. Initially you'll know little beyond your home glen. Send out some scouts, though, and you'll discover new resources and make first contact with rival clans. Before long you'll be building new settlements to tap the fresh resources, and you'll establish trade routes with neighbouring towns to get the goods you can't produce.

Economic success naturally means a happy people, and a happy people means a bonking people. Soon the pitter patter of tiny feet can be converted into new labour (in a useful sense) and armed forces who must be equipped and paid for by your industry and treasury. Of course, as soon as you become successful, you'll get paranoid about someone trying to take it all away again. Pouring resources into the military will retard your economic expansion but discourage rival clans from picking you off. Maximum security is assured by the building of castles, which must be defeated before the land they protect can be conquered.

"There are so many clans that it's not possible to crush them all by brute force alone, so playing them off against each other is essential."

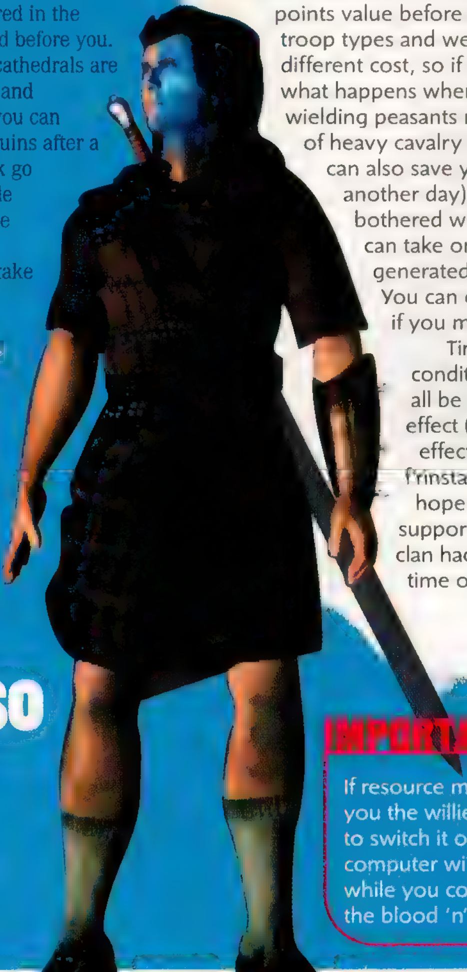
Your knowledge of the world depends on how much you commit to exploring, and though it means taking workers of the land, an extensive spy network is a powerful weapon. For example, snooping round a rival town can reveal information about its morale, troop levels, population and treasury. How you use that intelligence is up to you, but if the population is high and the morale is low, it may be worth sending in an envoy to convince them to join your side, banking on their current discontent to deliver all those lovely workers into your lap. Or, you may discover their treasury is bloated by a tax windfall, and decide a quick smash and grab raid is in your interests.

Though power-mongering in 13th Century Scotland is clearly more complicated than at first glance, Red Lemon are taking every precaution to ensure the game doesn't turn into an accountant's wet dream.

Individual towns can be auto-managed to produce specific resources, after which you can forget about them, and whenever you fiddle with a town's economy a little 'future's graph' pops up to predict the likely outcome of your settings. Which is a brilliant way of letting you experiment with different settings, without forcing you to play for hours before you realise that pegging your sheep to the price of the dog has cost you the game.

But the glorious difference between *Braveheart* and previous strategy games is that for every abstract adjustment you make on a map there is a real world consequence you can see in tangible 3D. Drop down into any one of your towns and you can stroll around, watching as the buildings ordered in the strategic section are constructed before you. Keeps, stockades, prisons and cathedrals are among the available structures and they're all fully deformable so you can pick through the smouldering ruins after a battle. Meanwhile the townsfolk go about their business and provide visual clues as to the state of the town's happiness.

And when you decide to take direct action, selecting from missions encompassing petty night-time raids all the



THE SLAUGHTER MARGIN

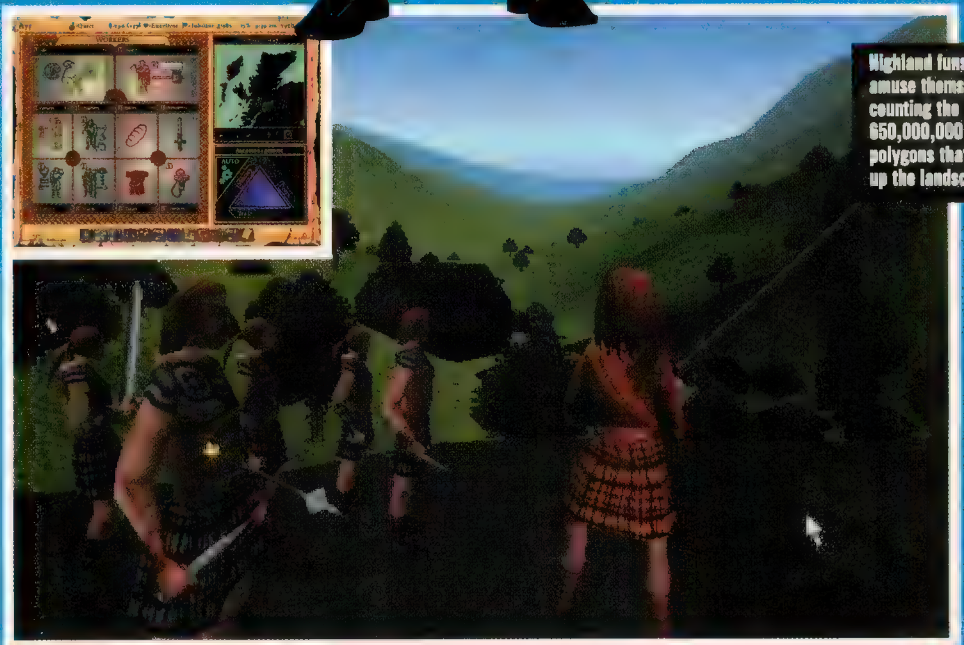
Though *Braveheart* is one of those rare games that looks far more rewarding in single-player, multi-player swingers can still get together for some straight, no strings, hand-to-hand combat. There's no mucking around with resource management either.

Players design their armies up to an agreed points value before taking the field. All troop types and weapons have a different cost, so if you want to see what happens when a horde of sod-wielding peasants meets an elite force of heavy cavalry then you can (You can also save your creations for another day). Or, if you can't be bothered with that, then you can take one of the pre-generated bash 'n' go armies. You can even be the English if you must.

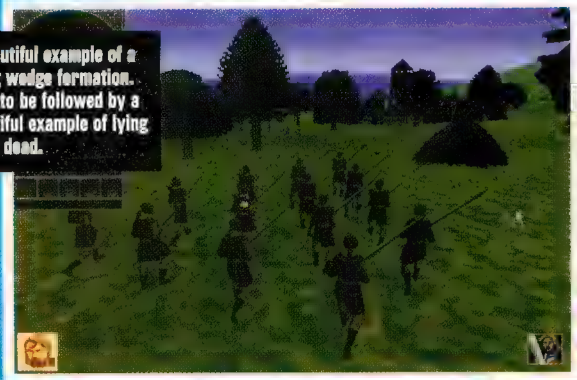
Time of day, weather conditions and terrain can all be changed to varying effect (archers aren't very effective at night f'instance) and Red Lemon hope to be able to support twelve-way clan hack-fests by the time of release.

IMPORTANT

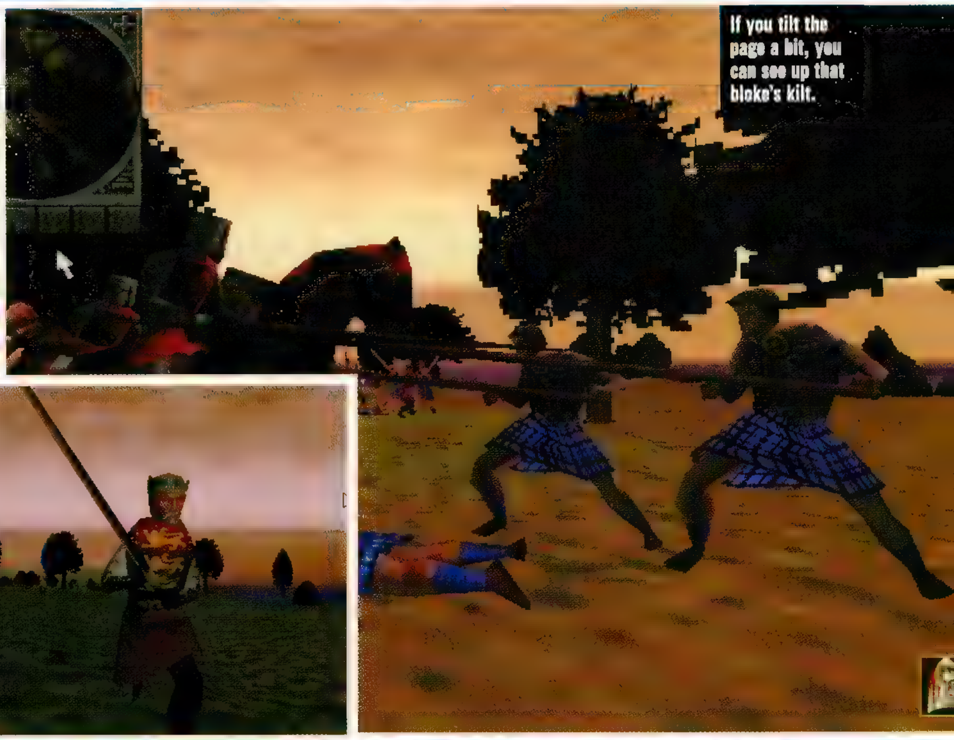
If resource management gives you the willies then you can opt to switch it off entirely. The computer will auto-manage while you concentrate purely on the blood 'n' guts.



Highland funsters amuse themselves counting the 650,000,000 polygons that make up the landscape.



A beautiful example of a flying wedge formation. Soon to be followed by a beautiful example of lying down dead.



If you tilt the page a bit, you can see up that bloke's kilt.

way up to mass battles, you control operations in real time. This will prove to be the ultimate test of *Braveheart's* integrated system as the success or failure of your turn-based strategies should be directly reflected by the quality of the troops you control.

The 3D engine bears some resemblance to *Myth*, though it operates on a far more spectacular scale, and uses the usual drag-select mouse control. The environment is astounding and allows you to rotate and swoop the camera to look behind trees and hills in a proper 3D space. Which means that fog-of-war is out and true line of sight is in, allowing formations to slink around, using the landscape for cover. Unlike *Myth*, though, the *Braveheart* engine uses fractally generated landscapes, which save on processing power, so it can zoom out to a *C&C*-type perspective and still cope with drawing the battlefield. Thus for huge battles involving masses of troops, you can command an entire front-line from practically a top-down perspective, while in smaller skirmishes and covert operations you can zoom in to troop level and sneak individuals round buildings to avoid alerting the town guard.

"Red Lemon reckon they'll be able to support hundreds of troops on screen at once during mass battles, and cope with urban combat and sieges as well."

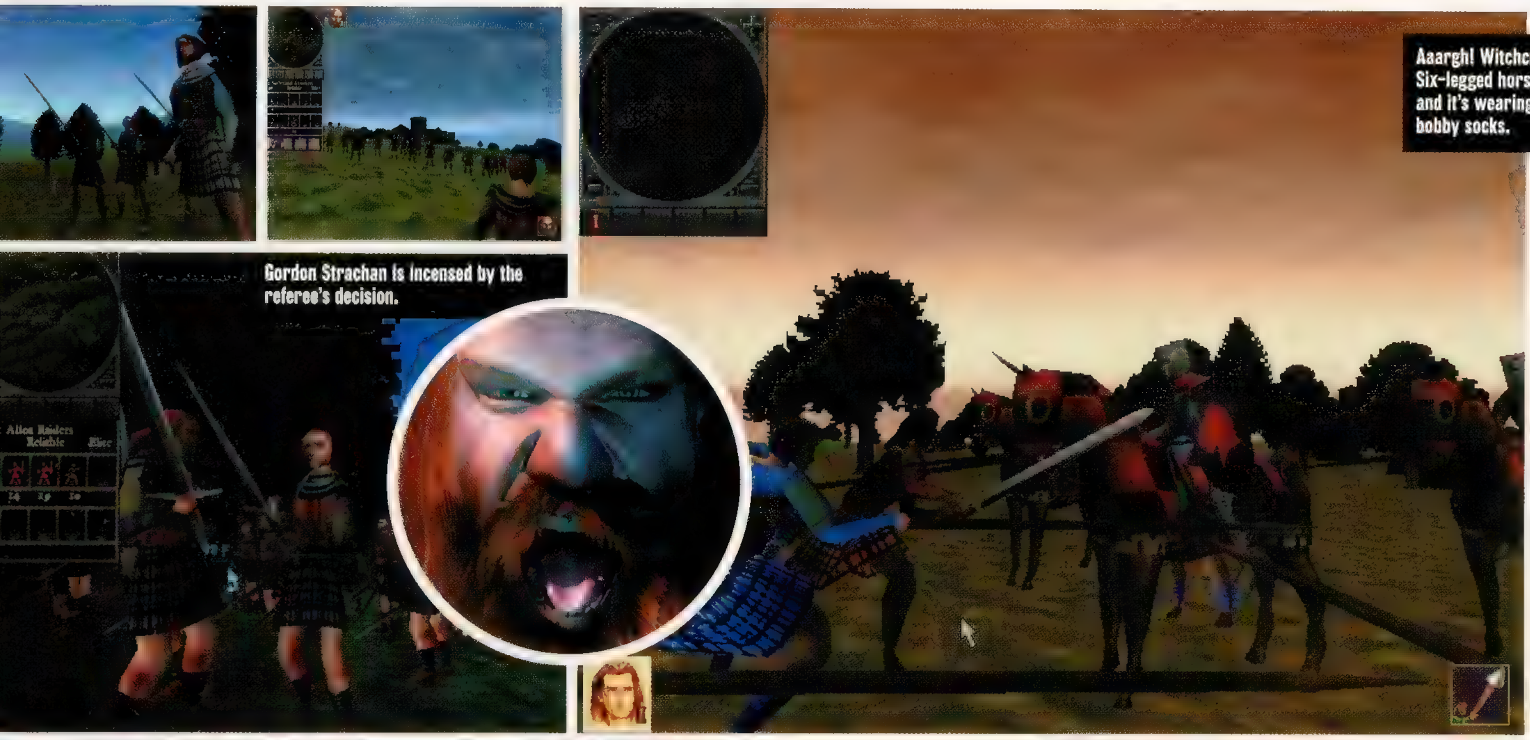
Graphically, combat is very impressive. In one scene I saw, formations of smoothly animated berserkers ran through woods to attack a square of English halberds. As the two lines crashed the Scots were scattered by the English formation and fought as knots of screaming maniacs as the English grimly held their ground. Red Lemon reckon they'll be able to support hundreds of troops on screen at once during mass battles, and cope with urban combat and sieges as well.

Sieges in particular look spectacular as troops wheel on the stone throwers which you can watch chuck rocks at the castle and demolish the walls. While you can also send in the battering ram and scale the ramparts with your siege towers.

Some might say that medieval combat amounts to little more than a big bloody scrum in the middle, but Red Lemon have worked hard on the finer points by including a wide range of troop types, tactical formations and strategic manoeuvres into their barney repertoire. Certain weapons are better against others (try long spears versus cavalry) and particularly when they're used in the right formations.

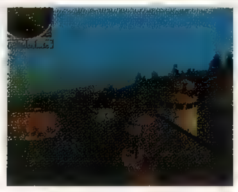
Some battles may be won by preparation alone. If you spy on an army, it's possible to find out how they're equipped and then tool up your men to exploit their weaknesses and ensure victory before a blow is struck. The movement and placing of your units is also crucial, with loose formations allowing you to distract and harass the enemy, while other units encircle and overwhelm their ranks.

Mass attack commands like 'charge' recreate



Aaargh! Witchcraft! Six-legged horse, and it's wearing bobby socks.

Gordon Strachan is incensed by the referee's decision.



the famous Highland bundle straight into the teeth of the enemy (chargers inflict double damage on impact but are vulnerable to spearmen in line formations), while units can also be told to scatter in the face of a cavalry attack, or fight a defensive withdrawal or form a circle, or regroup round their leader.

Leaders are heroic figures who have a profound effect at every level of the game (See 'He's 10 feet tall and fires lightning out of his arse' boxout). They bring an extra dimension to *Braveheart* combat because of their historical tendency to switch sides mid-way through a battle. During a scrap, you can attempt to bribe an enemy leader into joining your side. If successful then you'll win without a fight and absorb his troops into your army. Beware though, your own leaders can also turn against you unless they're loyal and you've kept them happy.

Meanwhile, if your troops are giving the enemy a royal chinning then you can instruct your leader to give quarter. If accepted, the enemy troops take the chance to save their own lives by joining your army. They will then fight for you in future battles though their loyalty will be questionable for some time after. Alternatively, if you're getting spanked, you can avoid losing all your troops by offering up your leader as hostage in exchange for the lives of your troops. You'll recover what's left of your army but your leader will be imprisoned and ransomed, leaving you to decide on whether to pay up, let him rot or try to spring him.

The freeform nature of the game can have untold ramifications even on a real-time decision like this. For example, you may plan to free your leader in a night-time rescue bid. Only to fail to find the prison in the heat of the real-time action. Luckily, you do find the storehouse, and cut your losses by looting the piles of expensive weaponry you find there, before setting the place ablaze and killing your leader. You've lost a good man, but so what? You've robbed the enemy of vital equipment and bolstered your own forces with a cache of valuable halberds.

Eventually, though, such fun and games should result in a united Scotland with you as King. Only then will you discover *Braveheart's* end game. Suddenly you're at the head of the Highland hordes and marching South to topple the evil Edward Longshanks and smash every goal post in London. The game enters a completely new phase at this point and we've seen the final piece of FMV glory... the future's tartan. Anyway, *Braveheart* is due in July, and Red Lemon are more than on course to produce a game that will reflect the excitement of the film, while creating one of the most formidable strategy games we've ever seen, with the first successful union of real-time action and turn-based management. Oh yes. Freedom! PCG

"HE'S 10 FEET TALL AND FIRES LIGHTNING OUT HIS ARSE"

Braveheart's only direct link to the film is the inclusion of some of the main characters into the game's leaders system. Each leader, whether he be Hamish (huge, ginger, hard one), Stephen Of Ireland (deranged looney), William Wallace (local boy made good) or any of the extras, is individually ranked in the leadership, combat, brawn, brain, stealth, diplomacy, fame and moral departments.

Essentially they act like ministers, with each one fulfilling a different role in your force according to their strengths. Blundering spies always being caught? You'll want to put a stealthy leader in charge of espionage, then. Want to convince a neutral town to join your side? Send in a famous leader to swing them with some celebrity flesh-pressing.

Of course, good leaders cost money and dead leaders are very disappointing, but they must be looked after. Without them your men are little more than a collected rabble.

WARZ
21
COMING
THE NEXT
IN REAL-TIME
Pumpkin Studios
PlayStation

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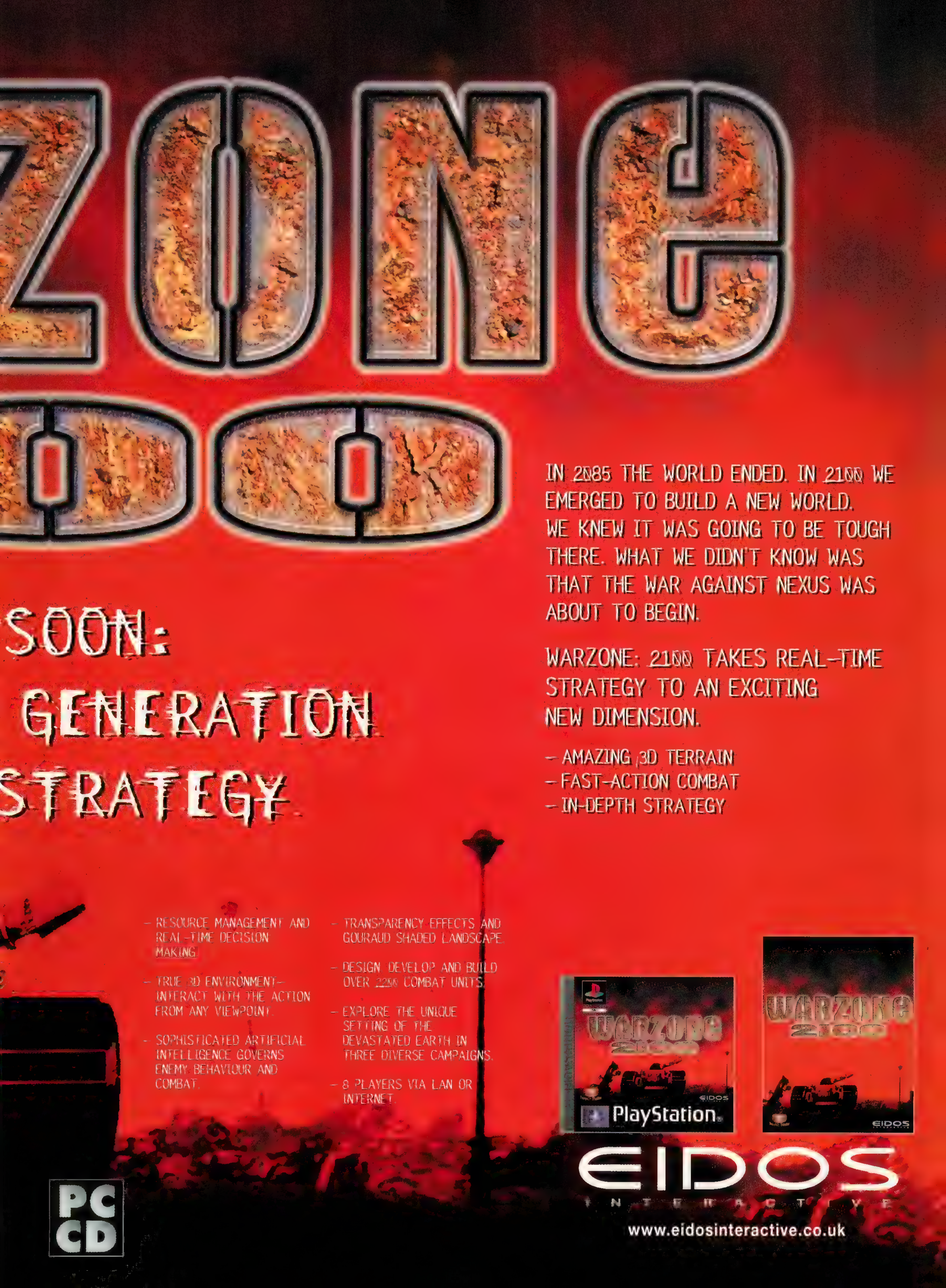

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STRATEGY

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IN SHORT

...print at least a word...
Tharun Zacharia, e-mail

Will this do?

I have found that *Half-Life* is like a big chocolate cake.
Charlie Ridley, Berkshire

With a special filling of death.

TOMB RAIDER 3 is much better than *ZELDER*.
Dave and Garf, Glasgow

That's Zelda. And it's not. Sorry.

Method Man, RZA, Chef Raekwon, Masta Killer, Killah Sin, Killarmy, Inspektah Deck, GZA Cappadonna, Big Baby Jesus, U-God and Rebel-INS.
Slim Shady, e-mail

We won't be impressed until you can name all of Belle and Sebastian too.

Why doesn't anyone turn off that red dot on deathmatch, because it gives them away?
Jim Johnson, e-mail

Because it can be used to guide missiles round corners.

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CABLES

The wise men descend into the public forum. GAMER decides to tag along too.
Write to: **James Flynn, Cables, PC GAMER,**
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.
Or e-mail: **cables@futurenet.co.uk**

INCLUDING PENS, PENCILS AND PAPER

You know the argument: no piracy, lower overheads, lower price. But I must tell you my story. Let's go back some years to when the Amiga was king. A good friend of mine was quite big on the piracy scene, so I always had the latest software first. To cut a long story short, he ended up lodging with me and managed to get my home raided by various police agencies at 4am on a Sunday morning. He claimed that two PCs and two Amigas in the house belonged to me.

They confiscated my 486 DX66, my TV, video, stereo and any type of recording equipment (including pens, pencils and paper). The bastard then legged it owing a month's rent, leaving me in the shit. I had to pay for a new front door, as insurance doesn't cover a police raid, explain to the TV rental company where the TV and video were and pay a rather large fine.

Danny Boy, Manchester

I think there's a lesson for us all there, don't you?

BEGINNERS AND TRANSPORT

Why are all PC games released now so EASY? All the games that I bought last year were completed within a week (including the mighty *Half-Life* – it's still great, though) and the only game that I've bought so far this year (*Rogue Squadron*) I completed in three days!

Why can't games be like they used to (*X-COM: Terror From The Deep* took ages even on beginners and *Transport Tycoon* took years on any difficulty setting) and not be so easy. I'm fairly sure that most people would be prepared to wait an extra month or so if it meant that they wouldn't be throwing money away on a quickly completable game.

Designers claim that people don't want immense games that take months to finish, but with the amount of time some games take to appear you'd think that they would take ages to finish.

Daniel Corwin, Cambridgeshire

Agreed, but it's interesting that the easily completable games you mention are

LETTER OF THE MONTH

SUPER-NUCLEAR FUSION

People have begun to talk about how good it is that in games such as *Half-Life* the weapons are more 'balanced'. In real life a guy with a machine gun just doesn't stand a chance against a guy with a super-nuclear-fusion-gun (if such a thing existed, but don't stop me, I'm on a roll). Incidentally I think that the idea of more 'balanced' weapons is crap. If it's fun you're after then nothing beats exploding some poor shotgun-toting fodder with a quad rocket. It's much more fun than spending ages taking pot shots at each other. Part of the whole point of the deathmatch in *Quake* is to know the maps and get the good weapons.

In a game with more 'balanced' weapons this is eliminated and I think this takes some of the fun away. So do people really want the things they have been clamouring for in games after all? Or is it just an excuse to stroke their chins and appear knowledgeable about such things?

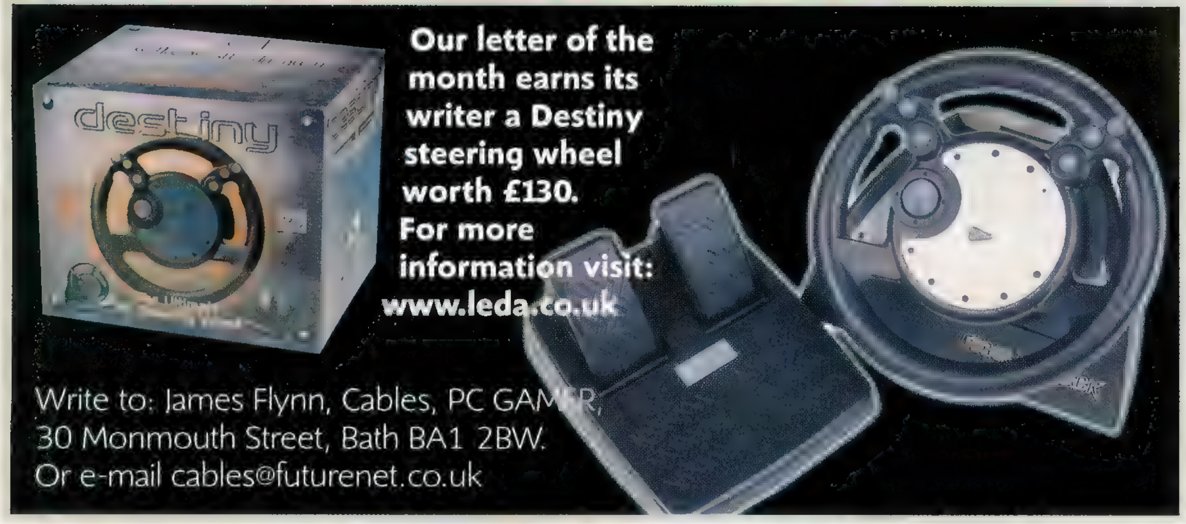
James Notermans, Surrey

Half-Life: balanced, not equal.

We think that you're confusing 'balanced' with 'equal'. Having one weapon that dominates in all situations is a major limitation to strategy. However, different weapons having completely different uses and tactics is a marvellous thing which we hope to see more of. Office devotees of Half-Life *deathmatch can be seen switching between various weapons as they move to different parts of a level, which has surely got to be a Good Thing.*

If one is obviously best, why on earth bother having the others at all? And as for the hypothetical machine gun/fusion cannon question, if the cannon takes ages to reload its megadeathblast then the rapid-fire-chap has a good chance. But nicely argued anyway.

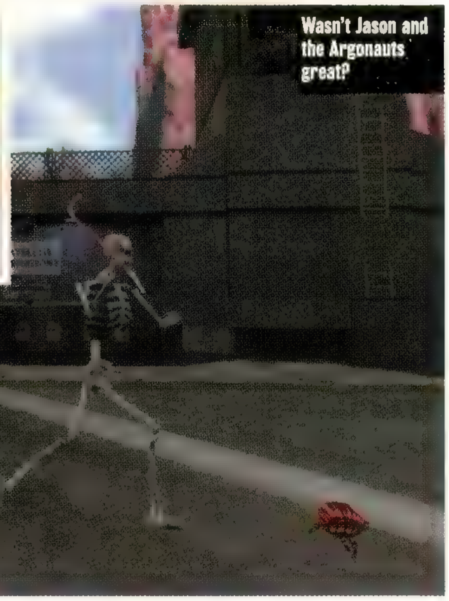
WIN A DESTINY STEERING WHEEL!



Our letter of the month earns its writer a Destiny steering wheel worth £130. For more information visit: www.leda.co.uk

Write to: James Flynn, Cables, PC GAMER,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.
Or e-mail cables@futurenet.co.uk

Ah... *X-COM*. Remember that night in Rome? You were beautiful then. I still... love you.



Wasn't Jason and the Argonauts great?

action titles, and the more lasting sorts are strategy games, that, by their nature, tend to take a lot longer to complete. We still drag out our copy of Civ II upon occasion here in the office. Perhaps you should try a few more of them. Or play with your eyes shut.

STOVED HIS HEAD IN

I am writing to complain about your *Half-Life* review in which you raved on about its unbelievable artificial intelligence. Intelligence? You must be bonkers. You see, I was walking along when I stumbled across this poor unfortunate security guard who was boarded up in a room. Rushing to his aid, crowbar in hand, I started to break him out of his tomb.

In his eagerness to be free, the fool stood too close and I caught him a swipe across the shins with my crowbar. It was only a little tap but it obviously caused offence. You wouldn't believe what he did. He pulled out his gun, shouted "Don't make me do this" and shot me. What a jerk! Surely anyone with half an ounce of artificial intelligence would have realised that it was an accident and that I was only trying to help.

Anyway, I didn't like his violent attitude so I stoved his head in with the crowbar. This has seriously affected me and I now don't trust anyone I meet on screen and just shoot everyone. I will be seeking serious compensation.

Andy, Southampton

As a little experiment we suggest you take a real crowbar, walk into a local pub and whack someone with it (on the shins, or anywhere you like). We suspect that your Half-Life *experience will probably be repeated; although we don't recommend you carry on with your other measures.*

TRANSIENT BURSTS

Now I like a laugh at the expense of tabloid journalists as much as the next man, but is it really so preposterous to claim that games affect our behaviour in 'real' life? I'm not suggesting that I've become a car-jacker since playing *GTA* any more than I'm suggesting I've become a marine since playing *Quake II*. However, my regular bouts of the latter have convinced me of one thing: my moods are often affected by my experience in the game.

There, that doesn't sound too revolutionary an admission, does it? After all, if games weren't capable of manipulating our emotions in some way, I'm sure a great many game designers would find little motivation in programming for people. I hope I'm not showing myself to be horribly different and strange when I admit that after some on-line *Quake II* sessions, I've experienced anger or frustration if it hasn't gone well. The emotions may not seem to last long, but I cannot agree that such moods end as soon as I choose to quit the game.

What's more, it's transient bursts of emotion like these which have resulted in some pretty unpleasant behaviour from human beings just like you or I.

Barry Cooper, e-mail

Yes, games can affect your behaviour. But so can films, music, books, dancing, reading, talking to people and almost anything. If games couldn't affect your emotions, there would be no point in playing them. However, saying that things can change how you feel is, as you note, a completely different thing to saying they make you a murderous maniac. Which was the entire point of February's feature in the first place. And to make jokes, naturally.

Never seen this game before. Wonder what it is?

IN SHORT

Marilyn Manson ought to do a game soundtrack.
Dave Gibb, Edinburgh

You are incorrect.

Is Kieron Gillen totally insane? Or merely unfunny?
Peter 'disco stu' Foran, Edinburgh

No and yes respectively.

If you guys say that you completed it easily, then you are all bare-faced liars.
Gary Simmons, Bristol

No, we're just great.

How come all your reviewers have weird names such as Mark Donald, who sounds like a place you could order a Happy Meal from.
Mob Hodge, e-mail

Arf, arf.

Instead of giving games a percentage score, you should give them marks out of 100.
Reece Woods, e-mail

Something's wrong here. I can sense it.

Elephants! Aren't they great!
Kevin Jones, e-mail

Elephants... the new beards? Discuss. But not here.

I own *Terra Nova*, *Carrier Command*, *System Shock* and *Bioforge*. Does this make me... special?
Chris Steadman, e-mail

Yes. You will receive your reward in heaven.

THE OFFICIAL PC GAMER TOP 20

Which games have you been giving as Easter gifts?

1	(4)	SimCity 3000	Electronic Arts
2	(2)	Half-Life	Sierra
3	(18)	Baldur's Gate	Interplay
4	(2)	Tomb Raider 3	Eidos
5	(8)	Alpha Centauri	Electronic Arts
6	(6)	FIFA 99	EA Sports
7	NEW	Delta Force	Novalogic
8	NEW	Worms Armageddon	Hasbro
9	(5)	Combat Flight Simulator	Microsoft
10	(9)	Gangsters	Eidos
11	(13)	FA Premier League Football 99	EA Sports
12	NEW	Myth II	GT
13	(10)	Star Wars Rogue Squadron	LucasArts
14	(16)	Football World Manager	Ubi Soft
15	(7)	Colin McRae Rally	Codemasters
16	NEW	Close Combat 3	Microsoft
17	RE	Flight Simulator 98	Microsoft
18	NEW	Resident Evil 2	Virgin
19	(12)	The Settlers III	Blue Byte
20	(17)	Thief: The Dark Project	Eidos

YOUR MOST WANTED

If these games were pop stars, you would be throwing your underwear at them.

Investigating your fevered minds, we find that little has changed. *Tiberian Sun* and *Quake III Arena* are still demanding most of your thought processes, with stalwarts such as *Duke Nukem Forever, Alien vs Predator, Age Of Empires II* and *Dungeon Keeper 2* filling out the super-ego. New faces this month are *South Park* and *Shogun: Total War*. Brian McDermott of County Wicklow is this month's winner.

Position	Game Wanted	Vote Share
1	C&C: Tiberian Sun	20.1%
2	Quake III Arena	11.2%
3	Aliens vs Predator	6.1%
4	Duke Nukem Forever	5.4%
5	Age Of Empires II	4.3%
6	Dungeon Keeper 2	4.0%
7	South Park	4.0%
8	X-Wing: Alliance	3.2%
9	Shogun: Total War	2.9%
10	Daikatana	2.9%

Send your Most Wanted votes to: **My Most Wanted, PC GAMER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.**

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

A LITANY OF THE LATE

Age Of Empires II
Microsoft
March

X-Wing: Alliance
LucasArts
April

TA: Kingdoms
GT
May

Aliens vs Predator
Fox
23rd April

Daikatana
Eidos
May

C&C: Tiberian Sun
EA
June (Groan)

Giants
Interplay
May

Homeworld
Sierra
June

Outcast
Infogrames
June

Quake III Arena
Id Software
June

Dungeon Keeper 2
EA
4th July

Messiah
Interplay
June

Duke Nukem Forever
3D Realms
September

Ultima IX: Ascension
Origin
September

X-COM: Alliance
MicroProse
September

Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine
LucasArts
September

Max Payne
3D Realms
September

Good & Evil
GT
September

Force Commander
LucasArts
September

Theme Park 2
EA
November

Commandos 2
Eidos
November

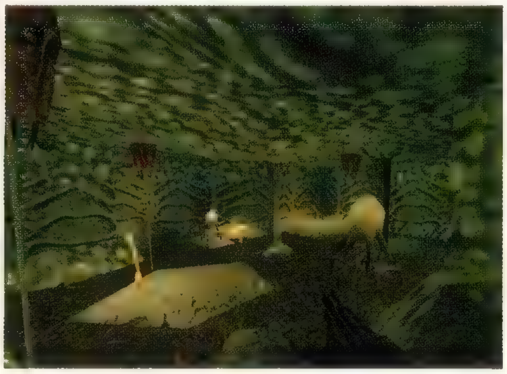
Grand Prix 3
MicroProse/Hasbro
November

Prey
GT
Spring 2000

PC GAMER

RECOMMENDED

We finally get the karmic payback from helping all those old ladies across the road. Welcome to Good Game Central.

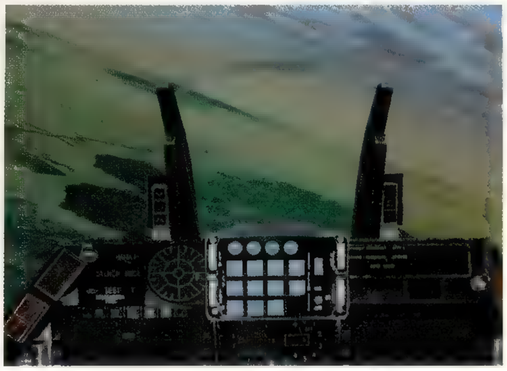


Half-Life (PCG 63 96%)

This continues to sit in a special corner of our souls making seductive cooing noises. And we haven't even mentioned how fabulous the ducky-and-divey deathmatch is. Join one, if only to see the fearsomely potent grenade launcher/machine gun combo. Or the amusing antics of the snarks.

Civilization: Call To Power (PCG 67 92%)

There were mumblings of surprise when the not-by-Sid-Meier unofficial *Civ II* sequel gained slightly more praise from review-bod Steve last issue. We didn't notice because we were all enthralled with the eternal joy of trying to invent the wheel. Or the shaving razor. Or opposable thumbs.



Falcon 4.0 (PCG 67 91%)

Flight sims intimidate us. As do loud noises and traffic wardens, but neither of them is relevant when talking about what we're calling "the new best flight sim in the world, ever". Some have speculated that the campaign-mode is so dynamic it can leave the confines of your computer and invade the real world.

SimCity 3000 (PCG 66 92%)

We've decided to take up arms, form a people's army and take over Bath. In preparation for our rule we've been spending hours learning the delicate craft of city-structuring in this, the latest instalment in the world's most famous no-there's-not-really-much-point-but-it's-fun series of games.

Alpha Centauri (PCG 67 91%)

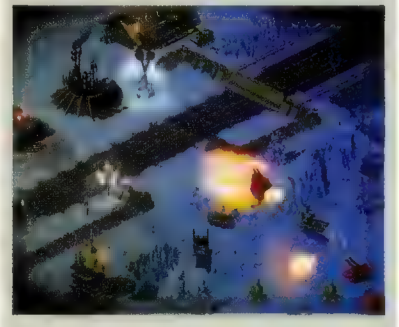
A bit arrogant perhaps. After Sid Meier stated that all civilisation was in *Civ*, he now lays claim to a whole unexplored star in Sid Meier's *Alpha Centauri*. A little grammar-based joke there, people. Anyway, this is an utterly magnificent hard-science fiction expansion to the *Civ* myth.

Worms Armageddon (PCG 67 90%)

There's been a large amount of squeaking and helium-pitched voices coming from the corner where Jim and Matt have been playing Team 17's latest. And the game's been pretty noisy too. There's a lot of heavyweight intellectual games at the moment, and we find this the perfect complement. Yum.

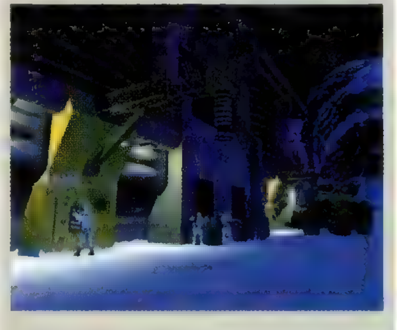
SLIPPAGE CENTRAL

"We have all the time in the world," they sing.



C&C: Tiberian Sun (Westwood/Electronic Arts)

Forget March – spring, even. Why? Because our insiders at Westwood report that *Tiberian Sun* will now not appear until around June/July time. And to be honest this time we've run out of excuses for them. Quite what they're up to given that the game engine is relatively simple 2D and they've been working on it for three years is utterly beyond us (and probably you). Of course it'll sell bucket-loads when released and swell the already huge Westwood coffers, but the technology isn't getting any younger these days. If they're making it a perfect game, ultimately we can't complain; but they could do it *faster*...



Prax War (Rebel Boat Rocker/EA)

We'll always allow ourselves a wry chuckle when developers spend more time hyping their game than working on it, before the whole operation goes pear-shaped amid a flurry of apologetic .plan files and press releases. Over a year ago, *Prax War*'s Lead Designer spent half-an-hour telling GAMER why it would revolutionise the first-person genre; we weren't impressed. Neither, it seems, were prospective publishers EA. "Things were not progressing as quickly as they would have liked," said a spokesperson this month, just days before the powers-that-be pulled the plug on the project. "Never mind," say we.

NEXT MONTH

PC GAMER

STAR WARS

AS WE PREPARE FOR STAR WARS EPISODE I
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X-WING ALLIANCE

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QUAKE III ARENA

Q3DM1, man. Bound to be a great ****ing level.

By MATTHEW PIERCE

RECORDING the salient features of *Quake III Arena* – one of the most eagerly awaited games *ever* – has become somewhat of an art form. Transcriptions of on-line chats featuring Id employees can often reveal previously unknown information, largely pointless plan updates occasionally contain well-hidden, but revelatory, admissions, and... well, there's always the phone too.

But it's thanks to a slight cranking-up of the hype machine that we now find ourselves in a position where quite a lot is known about *Quake III Arena's* content, structure and use of technology – even if first-hand experience is limited to a lucky few.

Of course it helps that Jim was chosen as the world's first games journalist to have a bash on the game back in November; perhaps more importantly, though, the game's Lead Programmer, John Carmack, recently took time off to demonstrate an early build of *Arena* running on (of all things) a G3 Mac.

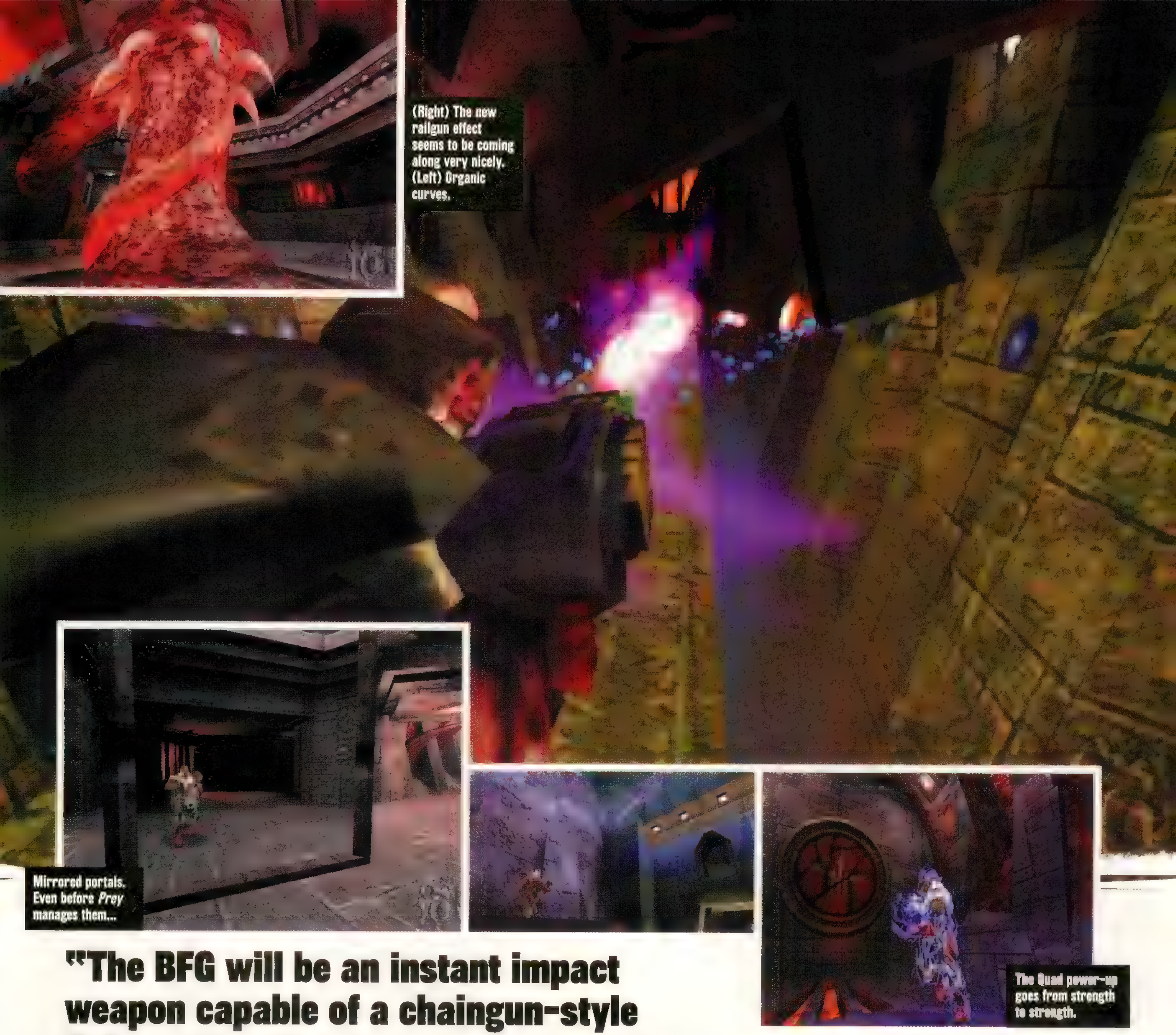
Since then, we've learned just how Id are once again raising the bar when it comes to building the ultimate in multi-player first-person shooters – and if these stats don't get you excited, nothing will...

Let's start with the weapons – the feature that, without which, *Quake* and *Quake II* would certainly have been a smidgen difficult. With *Arena* being a predominantly multi-player game (the single-player element being a series of matches against AI bots), Id have concentrated on creating a perfectly balanced, niggle-free selection of weaponry which should please most, if not all, of the ever-growing *Quake* community.

The list of confirmed weapons which will definitely be appearing in *Arena* currently reads like this: machine gun, super shotgun, grenade launcher, plasma gun, rocket launcher, railgun, BFG, flamethrower, lightning gun. Key differences to some of those weapons making a reappearance include the fact that rockets will travel at around 75% the speed of original *Quake* rockets (still much faster than *Quake II's*), the grenade launcher will also resemble the original game's example in terms of speed and physics, while the railgun's reload speed will also be cranked up. The biggest changes have

Exactly the kind of visceral detail that nightmares are made of. Or dreams in Mark's case.

(Left) These levels might not make it into the finished game, although we're praying the tongue stays in. (Above-left) The volumetric fog effects easily rival those of *Unreal*. (Above) The shoulder cam.


(Right) The new railgun effect seems to be coming along very nicely. (Left) Organic curves.

Mirrored portals. Even before *Prey* manages them...

The Quad power-up goes from strength to strength.

> **"The BFG will be an instant impact weapon capable of a chaingun-style firing rate and an awesome amount of both direct and splash damage."**

been saved for the BFG, which in *Arena* will be an instant impact weapon capable of a chaingun-style firing rate and an awesome amount of both direct and splash damage. Carmack has also revealed that weapon changing will be 50% quicker than in *Quake II* – an aspect of the second game which still manages to frustrate during key battles.

The environments are undergoing significant changes too – most notably there will be three distinct architectural themes for *Quake III Arena:* gothic (similar to the original *Quake* look), industrial (more akin to *Quake II*), and organic (only possible thanks to the introduction of curved surfaces). Rather than allow for huge numbers of players, the biggest deathmatch arenas will have an ideal maximum limit of 16, while more intimate one-on-one maps and specifically designed levels for team games such as Capture the Flag will also feature heavily. In an admirable nod to beginners, simple maps that don't require you to use mouselook to glance up or down will also be added – hopefully attracting the interest of those few who haven't yet experienced the pleasures of deathmatch play. Even more fundamentally, ladders won't be appearing in any of *Quake III's* levels – replaced in some areas by trampoline-style jump pads, such as those Valve introduced to *Half-Life's* multi-player levels.

CLASS WAR

The revelation that *Arena* will feature three separate player classes – light, medium and heavy – is currently causing much consternation amongst *Quake* purists. In reality, though, the inclusion of these stripped-down RPG elements appears to be almost essential, considering *Arena's* focus. As you'd expect, the lighter your class the faster you'll be able to run, although the class chosen will also affect the amount of armour you can carry as well as the damage that your weapons do. One constant is that every player class will be able to holster their weapon during play – instantly increasing their speed by around 20%.

A vast increase in the amount of items will add further depth to the battles, and Id are obviously keen to make sure they're balanced to perfection. Decisions over whether a grappling hook, a *Doom*-esque Berserker, and Haste (a further speed boost) have yet to be made. Those new items that *have* made the cut include a pick-up enabling you to fly for a period of time, a health cylinder that you operate manually in a similar way to *Half-Life's* health points, and a teleporter allowing you to instantly respawn at any chosen point on the map.

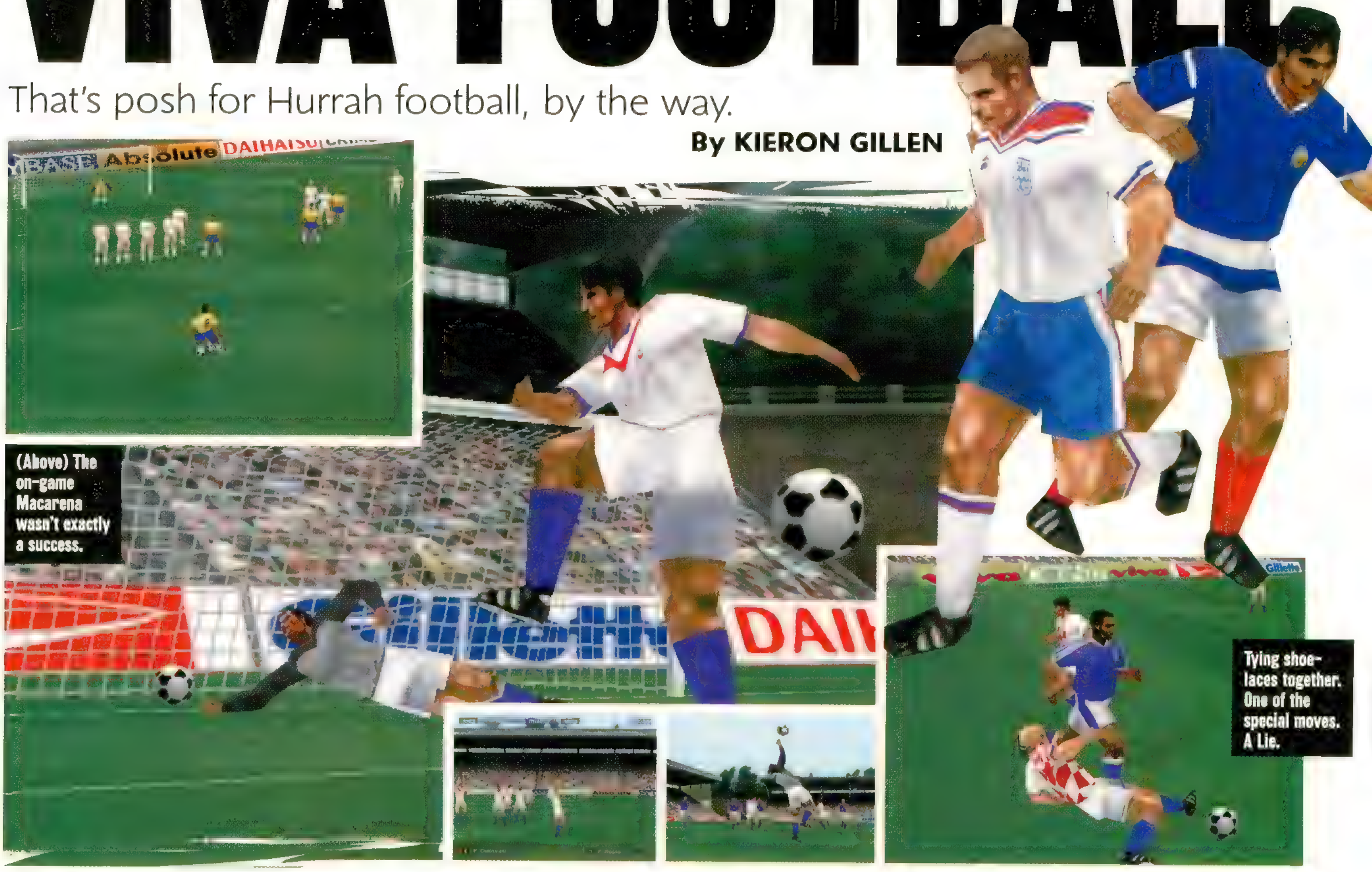
Even without a conventional single-player aspect to the game, it seems that Id are intent on cramming *Quake III Arena* with content – hopefully silencing those who see a ladder of bot-ranked deathmatches as a step backwards from the epic nature of *Half-Life* and *Unreal*. And if multi-player games really are the way forward, it means that Id will have once more delivered the game by which all others are judged. PCG

Developer	Id Software
Publisher	Activision
Web site	www.quakearena.com
Release	June

VIVA FOOTBALL

That's posh for Hurrah football, by the way.

By KIERON GILLEN



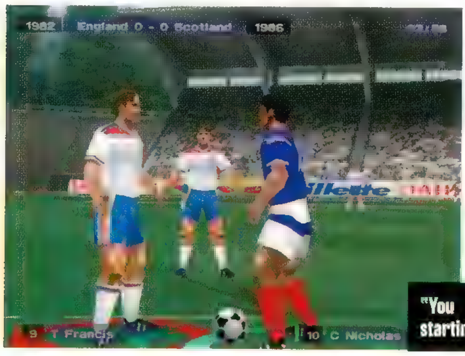
(Above) The on-game Macarena wasn't exactly a success.

Tying shoe-laces together. One of the special moves. A Lie.

IN the dim and distant past, I used to go out with a girl called Viva. Not that interesting, and not at all relevant. Especially because she didn't like football. However, by grasping desperately, I can link this seemingly random introduction to Virgin's forthcoming football game. Watch carefully and note there's nothing up my sleeves.

> **"Snatch teams from their respective time zones and force them to play twisted 'what-if' games for your pleasure."**

While I have a history with that girl, *Viva Football* is completely obsessed with the *history* of the World Cup. Ta-dah! *(As my last act as editor, you're fired. – Jim)* It includes all 1035 teams that have participated (or attempted to qualify) since the 1958 World Cup, a full 40 years of the beautiful game put on a silver shining disc. Obviously this allows you to place yourself in the noble boots of any team in any period, and play through their respective World Cups. Thus you can alter history, by taking the plucky 1966 North Koreans all the way to the Final, and breaking England with a disputed goal in extra time, with incalculable consequences for future generations.



"You starting?"

CHANGING HISTORY

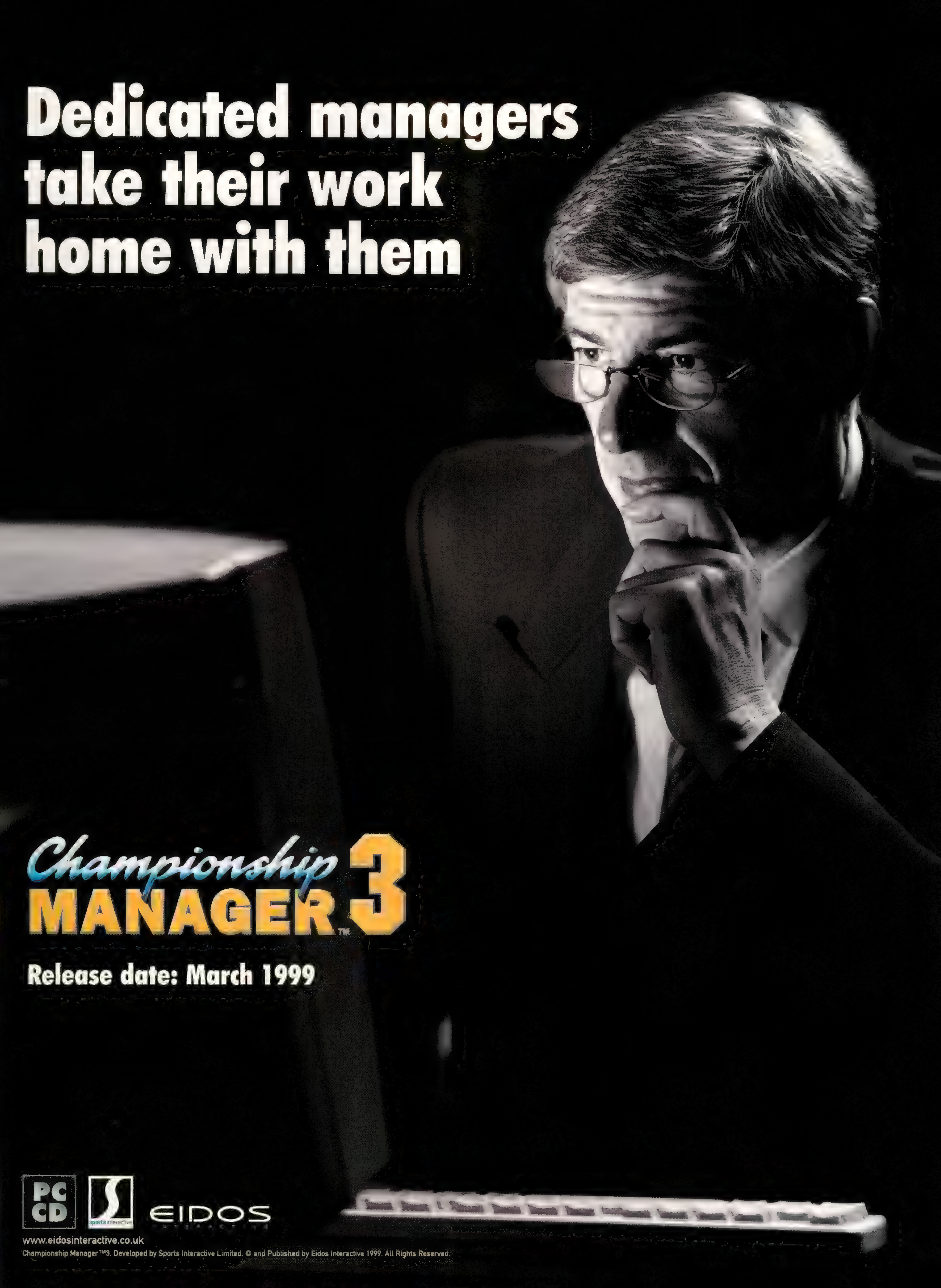
And, like some malevolent alien time-meddler, you can snatch teams from their respective time zones and force them to play twisted 'what-if' games for your pleasure. So you can watch the brilliant Brazilians of 1970 being murdered by the digital watch wearing, Creatine-munching Argentineans of 1994. Or laugh as the English glory boys of '66 continually fall foul of the changes in the back-pass rule.

Each player possesses 16 statistics, including speed, creativity and fatigue-rate, which are supposed to approximate their real-world counterparts, so obviously the authority of the result will stand for all time. Or at least until the losing party demands a replay.

Crimson, the developers, say *Viva* will be more than just a textbook with a game attached, claiming enigmatically that their control system is unique, possessing both the depth to satisfy the demands of experienced joypad Peles and the accessibility to let ten-thumbed people play without frustration. They also reckon their players are spatially aware, with complicated AI enabling them to run into space to create openings for defences-splitting passes.

Viva Football is running out into one of the most competitive pitches in PC gaming, with star-players like *FIFA 99* and *Actua Soccer 3* dominating, and super subs such as *World League Soccer 99* keeping the bench warm. Rather than attempting to go head-to-head with the big boys, *Viva Football* is taking a more individual approach, with a definite style all of its own. Will it succeed? We'll tell you as soon as the final results arrive next month. PCG

Developer	Crimson
Publisher	Virgin Interactive
Web site	www.vie.co.uk
Release	April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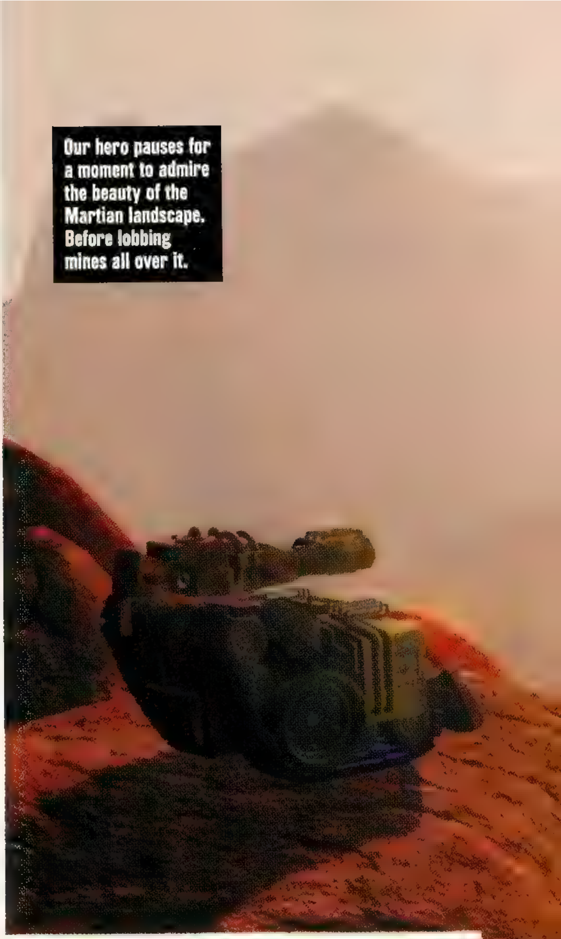
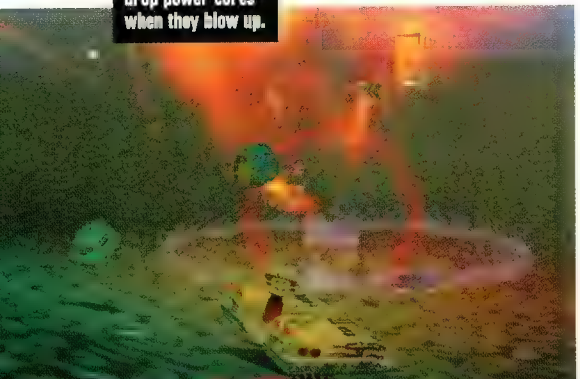
LATEST ON...

WILD METAL COUNTRY

Yet another dire warning of the increasing power of technology. Spectrum 16k, anyone?

By ROSS ATHERTON


Our hero pauses for a moment to admire the beauty of the Martian landscape. Before lobbing mines all over it.


Enemy Hippo tanks drop power cores when they blow up.

ON the planet Zargon, ten thousand years in the future, four races of cyborg creatures fell out over a game of Cluedo and resorted to blowing the hell out of each other in dune buggies. A rich seam of Thurbium ore was subsequently discovered and the four races argued about it a bit; all in the name of a paper-thin story-line. Have you ever imagined how much time is wasted inventing half-cocked plots which do nothing to enhance your enjoyment of the game? Well, it's... probably quite a lot. Imagine my relief, then, to discover that DMA's newest offspring, *Wild Metal Country*, doesn't require you to pay attention to any of that guff.

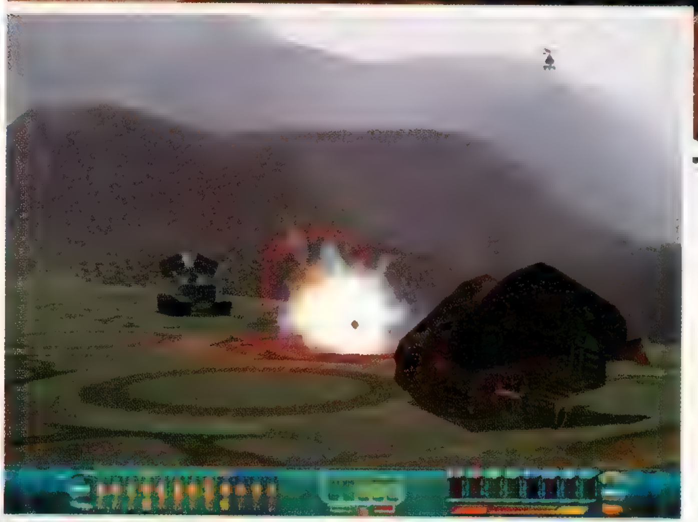
It seems that DMA are onto a good thing here. Remember *Grand Theft Auto*? Course you do. It was brilliant in its simplicity, and the scant story-line didn't force you into doing anything you didn't want to – in fact, you could just go joyriding and have fun. This theory is clearly a driving force behind *Wild Metal Country*, which, like *GTA*, also involves driving around recklessly with only the vaguest idea of what you're supposed to be doing, and having too much fun to care.

WMC doesn't ask you to put on your general's hat and marshal your troops on the field of battle – it's just you and your tank. The scene is thus: tear around the defined arena in search of eight colour-coded power cores – once you've got them all, it's on to the next level. To accomplish this you'll have to navigate the cliffs, plains, ravines and mountains of each enormous (and I do mean *enormous*) arena and tackle some of the most vicious AI enemies you'll ever encounter. The

SOUNDS LIKE TANKS

The sound engine created for *Wild Metal Country* is arguably the most advanced on the planet, bar none. Every single item, be it a tank, guard turret, vehicle fragment or bit of rock, has various sound files attached. For example, you might hear the distant rumble of an engine if you are some way off an enemy tank. As you get closer, you will begin to hear different engine notes, with the volume and detail gradually increasing as you get ever nearer. Many special effects are reserved for later on in the game, when you will run into larger, more sophisticated vehicles.

Amusingly, there is a menu option labelled 'Neighbours In/Out', which allows you to curb the wildest excesses of the sound engine, because these later machines have samples with their own truly awesome sound effects. Needless to say, the game takes advantage of the latest offerings in surround-sound cards and speakers; although on a basic SoundBlaster Live with four tatty speakers the immersion was superb.



If you get flipped, your enemies won't back off – they'll move in for the kill. Sometimes the only way to roll over is to turn your turret round until it tips you back over.

> **"Beneath *Wild Metal Country's* smiling exterior lurks a physics engine of startling capabilities."**

enemy vehicles – of which there are 17 – include hovering and flying machines as well as land vehicles, and are controlled by semi-intelligent computers. Some will chase you with unbelievable ferocity; others will pop off a few shots and then run to safety. A range of stationary guard towers complete the line-up, and allow you to be a little more tactical.

A QUICK TANK

You have a choice of five different vehicles, each of which is markedly different. Speed, mass and centre of gravity are among the features that differ, and they affect the way you tackle enemies and the landscape. Controlling your tank as you trundle round the landscape is simple but a little disorientating at first: instead of the usual driving controls, you actually have control over each track independently. This means that you can spin around on the spot as well as judge corners better – once you've got used to the system. There's a good variety of both shells and mines; and you can control your gun turret separately, which means you can drive away from enemies while firing at them *and* laying down mines.

All of which sounds fine and dandy and probably quite a lot of fun. All very arcadey, in fact. But there's more; because beneath *Wild Metal Country's* smiling exterior lurks a physics engine of startling capabilities. All the vehicles are individually modelled so that momentum, gravity and the effects of the different weapons all have their effect on movement. Surfaces affect movement in a realistic way too, and high-velocity objects (such as the excellent Roller Mines and Bouncer Shells, and fragments of exploding vehicles) skip and roll around the scenery as logic and physics dictate. Coloured lighting decorates the scenery, which is particularly impressive during the night-time levels. But it doesn't end there: the sound engine is quite incredible too (see 'Sounds like tanks'), and completes a very engrossing environment.

By opting once again for the arcade route, DMA are taking a bold step. By rejecting any notion of a ponderous strategic segment, they are declaring their intentions of making an immediately enjoyable arcade-style game, one which takes only minutes to get the hang of. A varied single-player game and plenty of options in the multi-player mode means that *Wild Metal Country* will have the depth and accessibility to attract fans of driving, action and shooting games. Keep your eyes peeled for our imminent review.

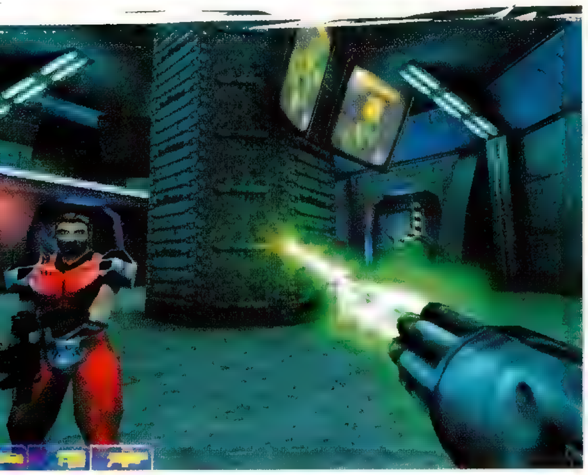
Some enemy tanks guard the power cores fiercely.

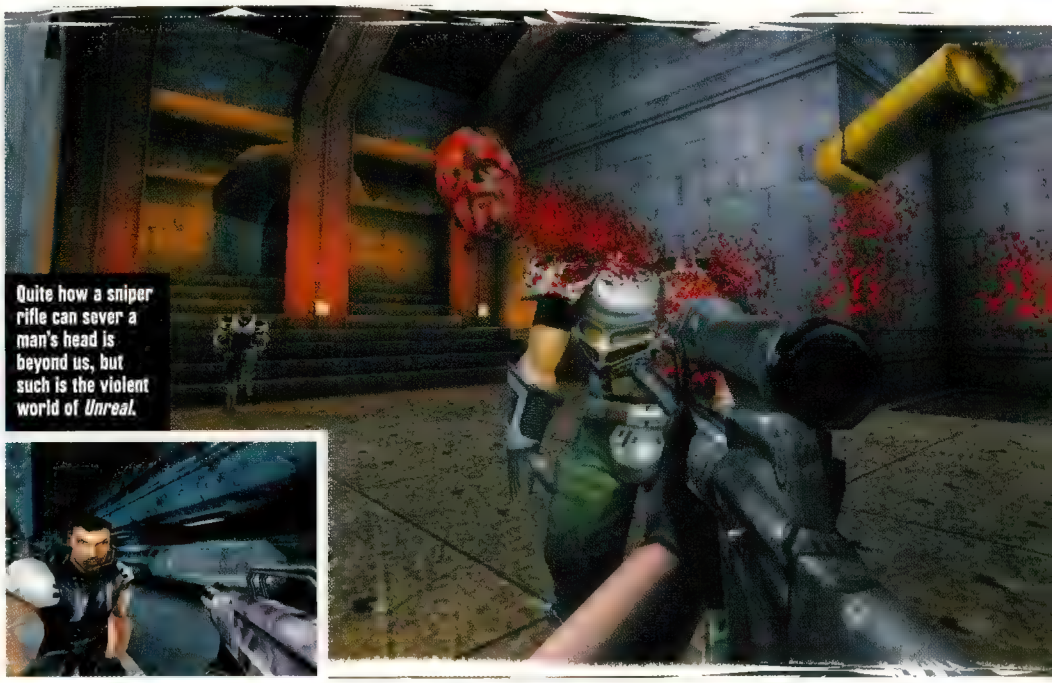
Developer	DMA
Publisher	Gremlin
Web site	www.dma.co.uk
Release	March

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Making up for the multi-player cock-up.

By STEVE OWEN





Quite how a sniper rifle can sever a man's head is beyond us, but such is the violent world of *Unreal*.

WHEN we looked at *Unreal* we loved it. When you looked at *Unreal* you loved it. And when you tried to play against some other people over the Internet it was an absolute mess. Yes, *Unreal's* multi-play code was as ugly as Mo Mowlam, but, unlike the Northern Ireland Secretary, a series of patches seems to have solved this.

But simply correcting *Unreal* isn't enough for Epic. They now have the compunction to belittle their knockers (as it were) and create the most stunning multi-player experience in the known universe. And verily it shall be known as *Unreal Tournament*.

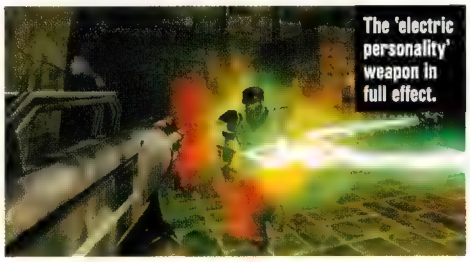
"Taking their lovely new network code, Epic have mixed in 34 new deathmatch levels, vastly improved computer AI and a wealth of new multi-player games."

Taking their lovely new shiny network code and their lovely old shiny graphics engine, Epic have mixed in 34 new deathmatch levels, vastly improved computer AI and a wealth of new multi-player games. But, no, non-Internet readers should NOT switch off now. Like *Quake III Arena* (although Epic are at pains to point out that they were working on *UT* before Id's announcement), *Unreal Tournament* takes the idea of deathmatch, but offers the single player a range of bots to play against rather than improve British Telecom's traditionally shaky financial situation. In fact, computer and on-line players can be mixed freely.

The challenges are particularly good fun, including the classic team and free-for-all deathmatches, traditional Capture the Flag, Assault (where two teams take it in turns to defend and infiltrate a base and complete a challenge) and Domination, where you have to capture key points around a level. There's also a special single-player game, a ladder of levels and trickier opponents that must be beaten to become a Grandmaster.

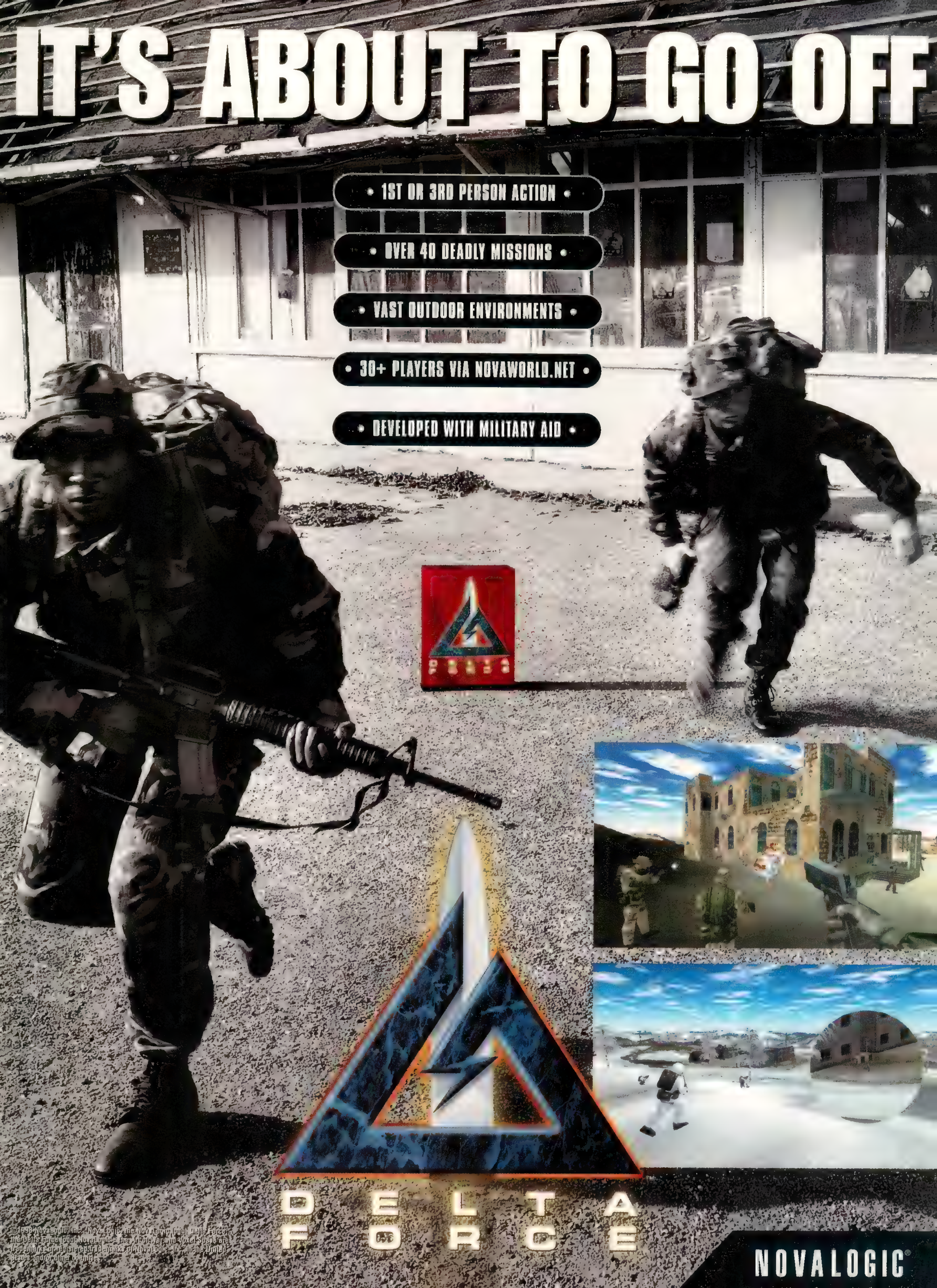
Steve Polge's AI has been drastically improved, with three or four bots at medium difficulty proving just as tricky as PC GAMER writers come 6pm. We were heartily impressed and well and truly thrashed at the highest difficulty. And when it comes to team games, orders can be given just like wingman commands in a flight sim.

Unreal Tournament is being released as a separate, stand-alone game, although it does install over the top of *Unreal* (so that you can use any existing maps you have), and is just as customisable. We expect to see a wealth of new levels and game styles following its release. PCG



The 'electric personality' weapon in full effect.

Developer	Epic
Publisher	GT
Web site	www.unreal.com
Release	April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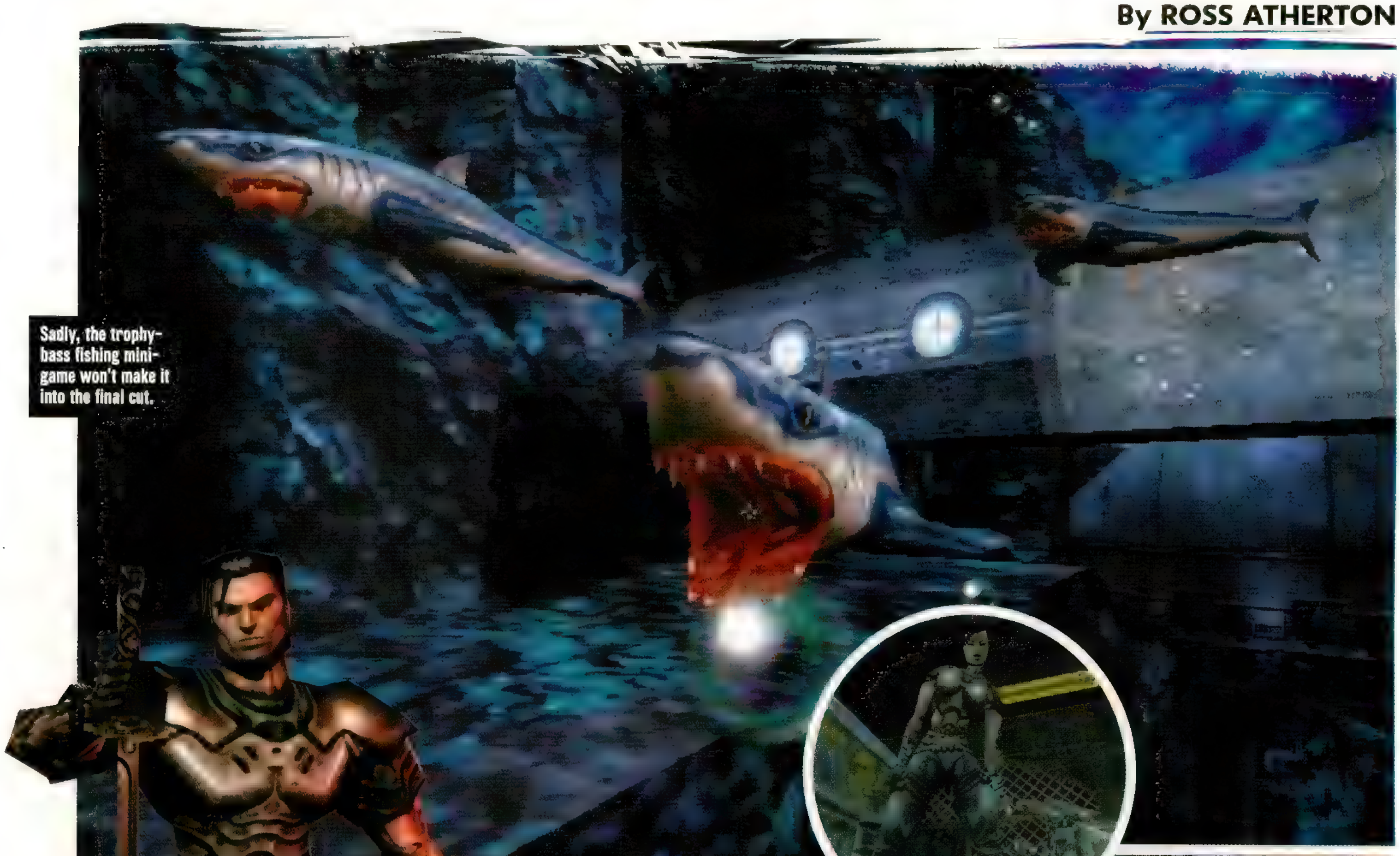
LATEST ON...

DAIKATANA

Insert your own hilarious Welsh Samurai joke here.

By **ROSS ATHERTON**



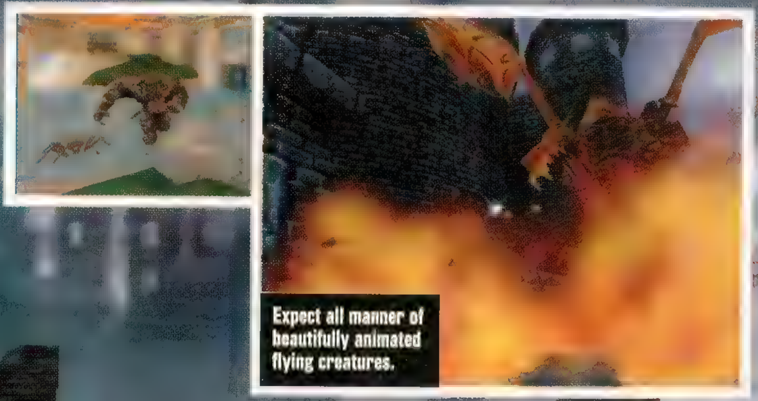
Sadly, the trophy-bass fishing mini-game won't make it into the final cut.

The Ancient Greece episode sees some pretty outlandish weapons o'doom.

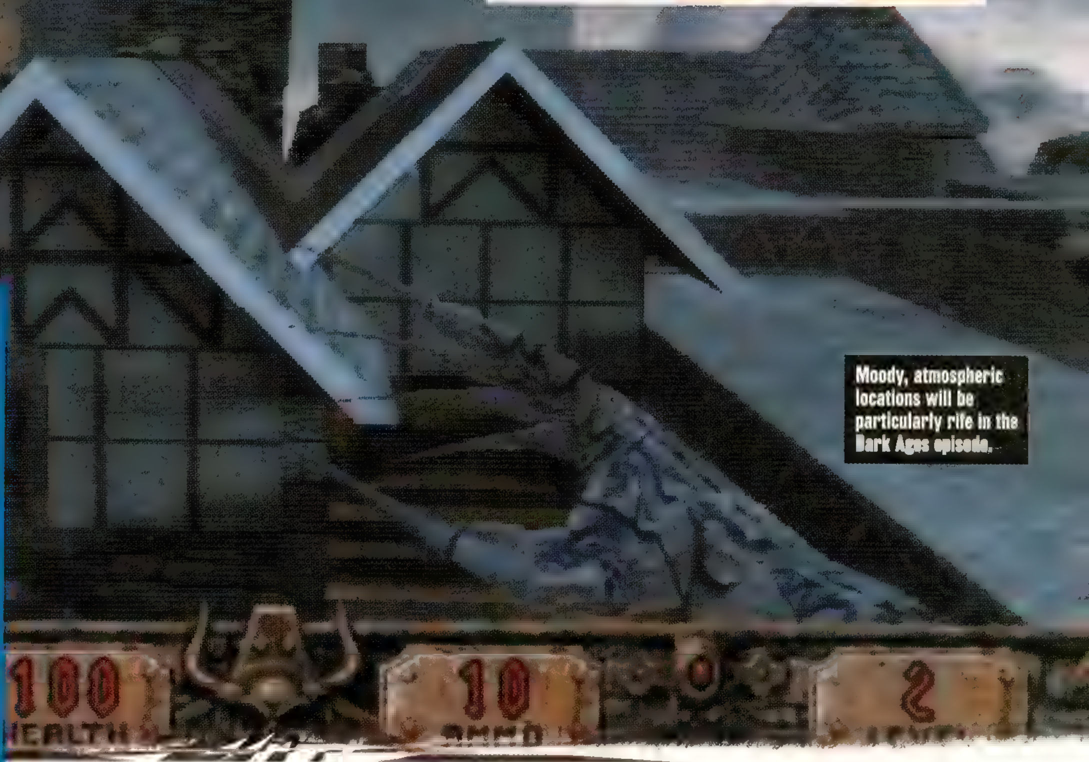
IF you have any interest in what goes on behind the scenes in the gaming industry, chances are you'll already know about *Daikatana* and Ion Storm's short but bumpy rollercoaster ride thus far. Even when the game was announced over two years ago, by maverick development company Ion Storm, it seemed unlikely to make its projected release date of Christmas 1997. Packed with grandiose plans and with golden boy John Romero behind the wheel, *Daikatana* nevertheless looked like being a winner even at those early stages.

But what effect has 18 months of extra development time had on Ion Storm's flagship game? According to Romero himself, it has allowed them to include every single feature they originally envisaged, without compromise. "The most important feature of the game is that it takes place over four completely distinct episodes, each of which has a different arsenal of weapons and a different set of monsters to face," he claims. "This massive variety will give the game unprecedented replayability."

Daikatana has also been created around the plot (rather than the other way round, as we are used to), so the fierce juxtaposition of environments and enemies will nevertheless be in sensible contexts. Set initially in 25th century Japan, your goal as Hiro Miyamoto is to find the legendary Daikatana sword, forged by your ancestor nine centuries previously. The sword not only has time-travelling capabilities, but also has



Expect all manner of beautifully animated flying creatures.



Moody, atmospheric locations will be particularly rife in the Dark Ages episode.

TASTY KIT

Ah, you want to know more about those weapons eh? Well, having used some of them against Mr Romero himself, I can tell you a few things about them. For example, that the Sidewinder rocket launcher in the first episode fires two spinning rockets (at a velocity somewhere between *Doom*'s rocket launcher and *Quake*'s, to be precise). There's also a powered fist for close combat, an Ion Blaster (now why did they pick that name?), the shotgun-style Shotcycler-6, the mine-laying C4 Vizatergo and the devastating BFG-alike Shockwave. And with six more weapons for each of the three other episodes, and the sword itself, *Daikatana* certainly won't leave you wanting for more weaponry.

> **"According to Romero, the extra 18 months development time has allowed Ion Storm to include every single feature they originally envisaged, without compromise."**

some pretty terrifying properties of universal destruction too. When the Daikatana is found buried in Mount Fujiya, the token mad scientist, Mishima, steals it and travels back in time to change the course of history. Believe it or not, it's down to you and your companions to seize the Daikatana and save the world.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Yes, that's right: your companions. For another of *Daikatana*'s innovative features is the inclusion of two characters who will assist you in your quest; Mikiko and Superfly. Mikiko, typical of female characters in action games, can run faster and jump higher while being more vulnerable to damage. Superfly, far from being a coke dealer in a blaxploitation movie, is a big lad of few words and much muscle. Both these characters will be available to help you in combat situations, but you can't actually play as them or directly control them. Instead, they make their own decisions about who to fight and where to explore.

The four episodes are played in order as you work your way closer to Mishima and your ultimate goal. Each environment has been altered in some way by Mishima's meddling with his time-travelling toy. First up is contemporary (for Hiro) Japan, in the year 2455. You can expect standard explosive-type weapons alongside more futuristic electronic and plasma devices to deal death with. Due to a mix-up with the Daikatana, next up is Ancient Greece, where you will be able to use weapons inspired by Greek gods and myths. Norway in the Dark Ages features crossbows and a variety of magical staves, one of which summons a hideous demon to do your bidding. Finally, San Francisco in the 21st century will feature recognisable conventional weapons, as well as some tasty laser-based kit.

On top of all these, you will also get to use the Daikatana itself, which will be found at the end of the first episode. Although it's not yet clear how you will use it, we do know that it has seven increasing levels of power which can only be gained by using the weapon in combat. You also improve your own characteristics as you progress through the game; and although these may not be on a truly RPG-bothering scale, they certainly add a different element to the game and further incentives to progress.

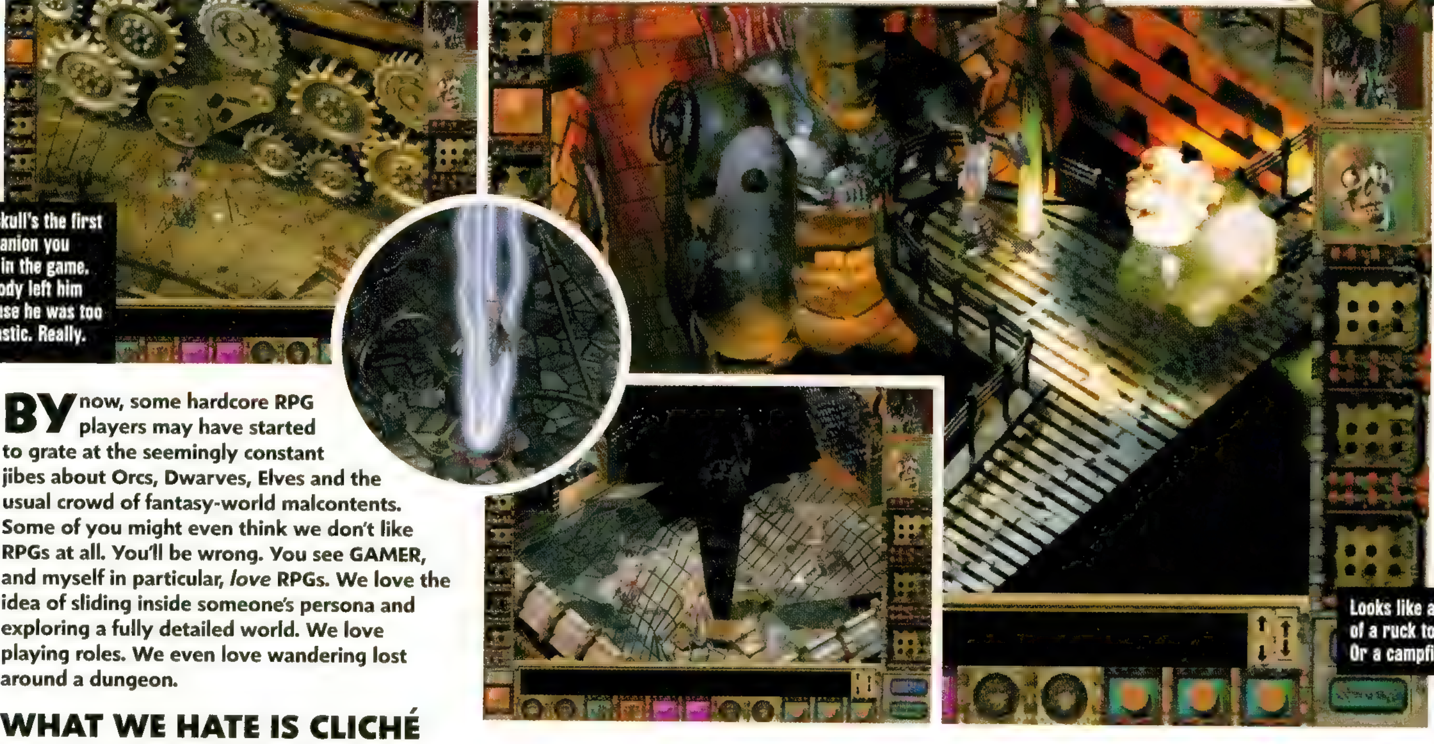
But what will it all add up to? In the 18 months since *Daikatana*'s intended release date, we've seen other show-stopping first-person shooters such as *Quake II*, *Unreal* and *Half-Life*, to name only the best ones. Crucially, its release may also coincide with that of *Quake III Arena*, which, with its emphasis on multi play, will prove a tough match for *Daikatana* in the deathmatch arena. Despite all the problems, though, Ion Storm have had the courage to try something different with their single-player game. And that will stand or fall on its twin innovations: sidekicks and episode-specific weapons. Just don't hold your breath. PCG

Developer	Ion Storm
Publisher	Eidos
Web site	www.ionstorm.com
Release	May

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

The dark side of *Baldur's Gate*...

By KIERON GILLEN



The skull's the first companion you meet in the game. His body left him because he was too sarcastic. Really.

Looks like a bit of a ruck to me. Or a campfire.

BY now, some hardcore RPG players may have started to grate at the seemingly constant jibes about Orcs, Dwarves, Elves and the usual crowd of fantasy-world malcontents. Some of you might even think we don't like RPGs at all. You'll be wrong. You see GAMER, and myself in particular, *love* RPGs. We love the idea of sliding inside someone's persona and exploring a fully detailed world. We love playing roles. We even love wandering lost around a dungeon.

WHAT WE HATE IS CLICHÉ

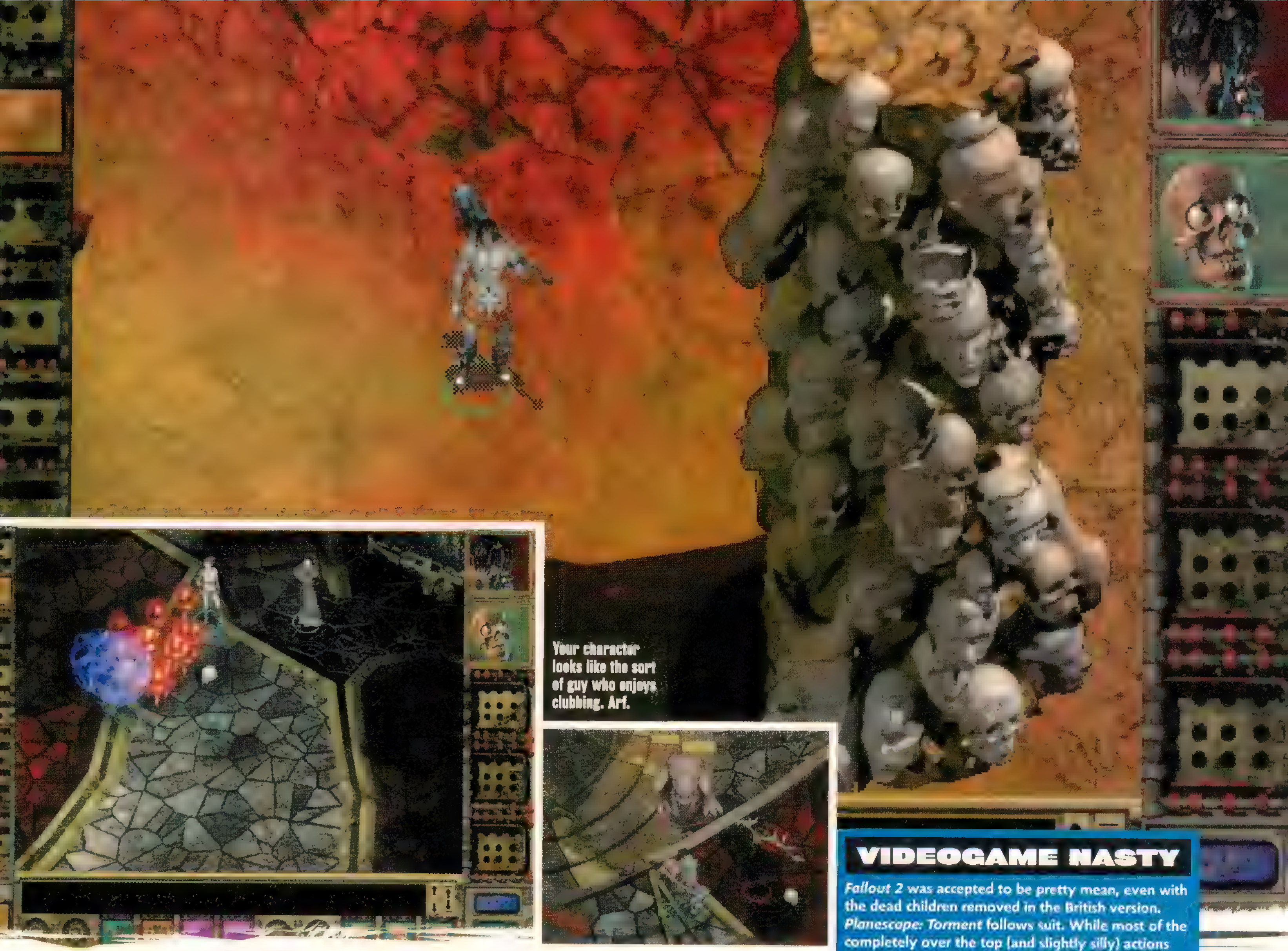
Because for every *Baldur's Gate* that takes the usual fantasy world but bases its plot around an intelligent web of deceit and political manoeuvring, there are a thousand ill-thought-out messes, where your only real motivation is to find a number of artefacts (rings and swords being fairly common; the Aubergines of Power less so) and use them to destroy some random threat that promises to destroy civilisation (Dragon, Demon Lord, out of control bus conductor). It's absolutely soul-crushing, and is enough to make us weep onto our mouse-mats. If we're talking Fantasy, why is every single one the same? Where's the originality? Where's the vision to tell a real tale?

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to *Planescape: Torment*. An RPG officially licensed from the classic/hopelessly dated Advanced Dungeons & Dragons universe, which seems delightfully fresh in both theme and execution (See the 'Where are the Elves?' box for more details on the world's history). It runs on the same Bioware Infinity Engine as the massively successful *Baldur's Gate*, but the graphics are scaled up to allow more detail and to emphasise the character-based focus of *Planescape*.

You play an immortal whose life has spanned millennia. His eternal existence has a small quirk. Every time he resurrects himself after dying he suffers complete and utter amnesia. He starts the game in this state. In his previous lives he reached the very pinnacle of each of AD&D's character classes, so theoretically has access to all those God-like powers... if only he could remember them. Rather than attempting to gain experience, as in a typical RPG, in *Planescape* you

WHERE ARE THE ELVES?

For all its long history, when people were designing plots for AD&D games and required a supernatural 'thing' of extreme potency, but had no idea where it should come from, they simply claimed it was from The Outer Planes. Of course, after 30 years, this made The Outer Planes a contradictory, confusing mess. In 1993 the game's creators decided to have a bit of a tidy-up, and tied the whole area together into the Planescape world, where millions of spheres of existence are scattered around the central infinite tower of Sigil, on whose tip you start the game. And there are no Elves.



Your character looks like the sort of guy who enjoys clubbing. Arf.

VIDEOGAME NASTY

Fallout 2 was accepted to be pretty mean, even with the dead children removed in the British version. *Planescape: Torment* follows suit. While most of the completely over the top (and slightly silly) actions have been left on the cutting floor, such as using one of your detached limbs to club a foe to death, what remains is gruesome, placing the game several dimensions away from merry Hobbits skipping gaily through the Shire. Expect to press scalpels into your foes' eyes, skin slain beasts and use their hide as armour and cast spells that make blood pour from the target's every available orifice. Erk.

"Development is based purely on your approach to the game – in other words, the way you play defines your character."

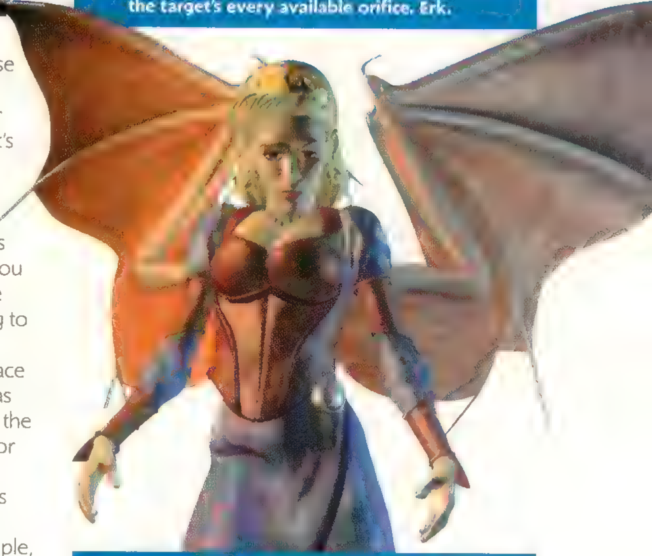
have to chase memories. The usual dial-a-personality routine at the start has been dispensed with and there are no character classes, development is based purely on your approach to the game – in other words, the way you play defines your character. Your many lifetimes have also left marks on your body: you look like a leather-skinned Zombie, but, and I quote developers Black Isle, "you have a raw, animal magnetism that makes women swoon".

While in Japanese style RPGs it's accepted that you are restricted to a certain character, the bed-rocks of Western-style games are player choice and design. Essentially it's a compromise between plot and persona. It's harder to become emotionally involved with a character that someone else has imposed on you, but it's obviously harder for designers to weave a compelling story around someone who doesn't exist until the player steps in. *Planescape* lets you redefine your character as you progress, but will it be enough to make you love the half-dead chap? And even then some choices are forever closed: you're never going to be a female immortal, for example.

The game's world is a suitably chaotic place too. It's a realm where intangible things, such as thoughts and emotions, have direct effects on the environment. You can reshape the world, kill or raise beings from the dead or alter the already non-standard laws of physics. While this makes you powerful, the very same strengths will be available to those who oppose you. For example, it's possible that your quest will take you through a city that was formed from the solidified regrets of an entire nation. Whatever that means.

Planescape: Torment is certainly different, and so is welcome round PC GAMER anytime. But will it manage to solidify its diverse and violent elements into a game we can truly love? That's a different question. Here's hoping...

Washing up after meals proved torturous in *Planescape*.

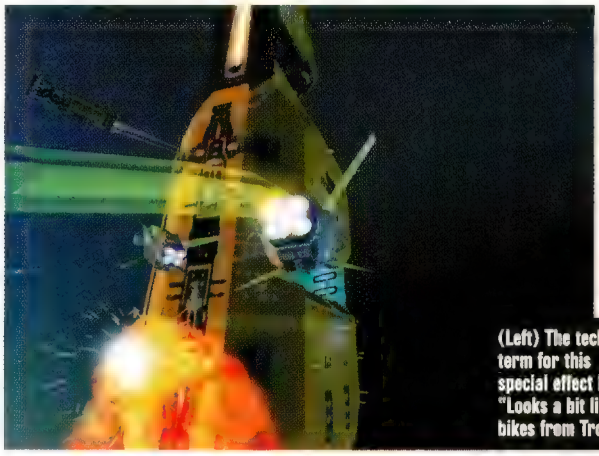


Developer	Black Isle
Publisher	Interplay
Web site	www.blackisle.com
Release	Summer 1999

HOMEWORLD

The most beautiful, dramatic strategy game ever. Full stop. Probably.

By KIERON GILLEN



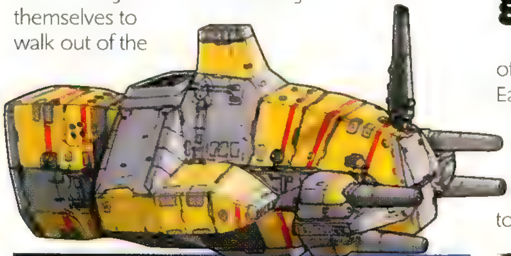
(Left) The technical term for this special effect is, "Looks a bit like the bikes from Tron."

Painting road markings in space proved hazardous.

BLOODY gorgeous. No matter what else you can say about *Homeworld*, it's absolutely stunning. There isn't an RTS game that's even anywhere near its league. Most hardcore strategy players won't even be reading this, as they'll have skipped past, thinking *Homeworld*'s an *X-Wing* clone. It's not. It's a fleet-based RTS, including resource exploitation, unit construction, technology trees and tactical encounters. It's just one that is to others of its genre what Audrey Hepburn is to a decomposing compost heap.

What's really impressive is that Relic are trying to make it play as revolutionarily as it looks. Our main reservation about *Homeworld* is that playing an RTS where everything's hung in space, and thus can be attacked from any direction, could be confusing. Several members of the GAMER staff have enough trouble orientating themselves to walk out of the office without bumping into anything. How on Earth are we meant to deal with floating in a void while trying to execute multi-dimensional tactics? Memories of *Star Wars: Supremacy*'s dull real-time fleet battles sprang to mind, where we spent most of our time adjusting our view to locate the action.

"*Homeworld* constantly monitors your play style and adjusts the opposition, making sure that no matter how good you get, you're *always* playing on hard."



Matt claims his homeworld is Venus. We sense deceit.

CHILD'S PLAY

Of course, such fears seem to be the mumblings of a frightened elderly relative, unwilling to leave their house in case the sky falls on their head. Relic have made *Homeworld* significantly easier to control than many other games. The problem of losing sight of the battle is solved by your view always being attached to one part of your fleet. By zooming in and out, or rotating with the mouse, different panoramas of the universe are revealed, and switching to a different ship changes your centre. This powerful-yet-easy approach continues in the other controls, with Relic claiming that 80% of all options are available with the mouse. Of course, there's a host of definable short-cuts too. The interface seems so simple that a two-year-old child could play and not even leave spittle on the mouse. This is, of course, the correct way to do things – you should battle with the game, not its interface.

Playing the single-player campaign is also going to be a different experience to most RTS games. Theoretically there's absolutely nothing to stop you hyperspacing to the next of the 14 sections the second your gargantuan Mothership has produced sufficient fuel to power its engine. What stops you waltzing through the game is that you'll quickly run out of supplies, leaving yourself vulnerable to marauding pirates later. Equally, some of the tasks you come across require you to have found something in a previous sector to prevail, though the game makes heavy hints towards what's essential to later progress. Also, to research certain attractive technologies, you must have investigated the ancient floating spacewrecks. *Homeworld* spurns traditional difficulty levels for

There's obviously some kind of sale on tasteless green paint in outer space.

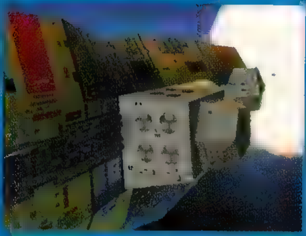
Actually, red and yellow's pretty bad too.

constantly monitoring your play style and adjusting the opposition, making sure that no matter how good you get, you're *always* playing on hard.

ATMOSPHERIC CHANGES

You might think that since the game occurs in the icy vacuum of space it wouldn't have any dependency on the environment, so could be tactically limited. In fact, *Homeworld* actually uses the environment in a more interactive manner than most RTS titles. Energising dust, or gas clouds, creates massive lightning storms, perfect for decimating an overconfident fleet. The Nebula's plasma-arcs can even surge down its arms and lash out further away. Large asteroids can be demolished into asteroid belts, precluding travel by fleets and larger ships. Small fighters can still work their way through... unless you hide a gravity well generator in there. This graviton-manipulating ship makes the rocks bounce around like agitated bees, while slowing down the fighters and leaving them to the whims of physics.

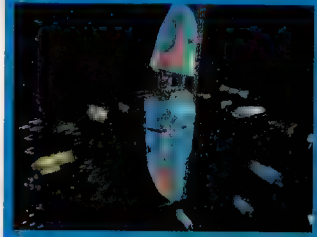
THIS RAG TAG FLEET... DESTINATION EARTH. EXCEPT NOT. HONESTLY.



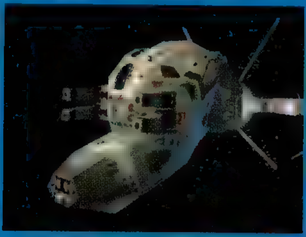
ION CANNON FRIGATE
Their ion blasts cause raging lightning storms inside dust clouds. Or are handy for zapping at the Mothership. Like it's doing here.

RESOURCE COLLECTOR
The accountants of the *Homeworld* universe, so not cool, but absolutely necessary to keeping things ticking over. Like it's doing here.

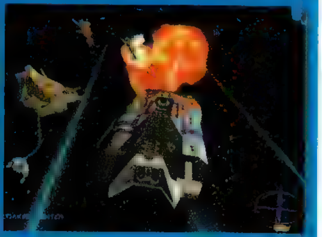
HEAVY CORVETTE
A mainstay of any fleet, appears to be particularly dramatic when forming a flying inverse-wedge and shooting. Like it's doing here.



MOTHERSHIP
Home to your entire race and crucible of their destiny. Available for weddings and bar mitzvahs. Like it's doing here. Sorry... I'll stop that now.



THE MEAN LOOKING ONE
No idea about this chap, but doesn't he look mean? Wouldn't like to bump into him in a space alleyway, that's for sure.



STEALTH FIGHTER
Terminally shy, she's able to cloak herself for cunning sneak attacks. She's in this picture, but (ha!) fully cloaked, so isn't visible. Arf. (Dies)

With a few more pages I could have mentioned *Homeworld*'s elaborate plot, massive customisable ships, sophisticated formations, 2-8 player multi-player, NPC races or any of the other things that have us wiping lustful drool off our desks. I don't, so can't. You'll just have to wait for its release. Build yourself a special *Homeworld* calendar to count the days off. PCG

Developer	Relic
Publisher	Sierra
Web site	www.relic.com
Release	June

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DIVERSIONS

Tiberian delay madness, chocolate carrots, magic and girls, girls, girls.

THE SPY

The Easter Story

Console hits go PC, while GT and BarrysWorld have financial crises.

The first temptation of the new year arrives in the form of chocolate eggs, and The Spy finds himself throwing dietary caution to the wind. The culinary resolutions may have been broken, then, but the good intentions remain in place, pushing The Spy ever onwards in the pursuit of industry rumours, gossip, hearsay, and half-truths.

We begin this month with some heart-warming news. Ever eager to approach the consoles' level of sales figures, if not actually beat them at their own game, a couple of developers have committed to bringing their previously PlayStation and N64-only titles to the PC. Infogrames have revealed that *Mission: Impossible*, based on the okay-ish Tom Cruise action flick of the same name, is soon to see the light of day. More excitingly, the game that's currently got dedicated followers of Sony in a flap, *Metal Gear Solid*, is also to get the PC treatment.

A title that's destined to do the business charts-wise is *C&C: Tiberian Sun*; that is, if it ever appears. Latest news has it that the tardy tanks now won't hit shelves before June at the earliest. Hang on in there, The Spy implores you. As ludicrous as it sounds, we may even catch a glimpse of the two new Star Wars games before *Tiberian* rears its voxelled head. That's right, The Spy said *two* Star Wars games. You've already been told of the arcade-style racing game known as *Pod Racer*, but watch out for something even more interesting to tie in with silver screen events this May... got the message?

> **"We may see *two* new Star Wars games before *Tiberian Sun*."**

A group who apparently didn't were the development team behind Interactive Magic's Aztec real-time strategy title, *Theocracy*. According to the publisher, *Theocracy's* been canned for not fitting into their catalogue of 'mass-appeal titles'. The developers, however, are still working on it, seemingly unaware of the bad news. Perhaps they saw I-Magic's other offerings, *Thunder Brigade*, *Robo Rumble* and *Vangers*, and became confused about the definition of 'mass-appeal A titles'.

One company who definitely understand the term 'mass-appeal' are Origin, who, the rumours have it, have started work on another *Privateer* game – this one being a hugely multi-player affair. In fact, The Spy was saddened and surprised to learn of the problems being experienced by another bastion of multi-player gaming – *Barrysworld.com*, the hugely popular UK game provider. It appears that if sufficient funds aren't raised by 31st March in order to solve their latency problems, the site will close down. If you're feeling generous, or have advice that could save them, direct your chat to the ops of *irc.barrysworld.com #savebarrysworld*.

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID LYTTLETON

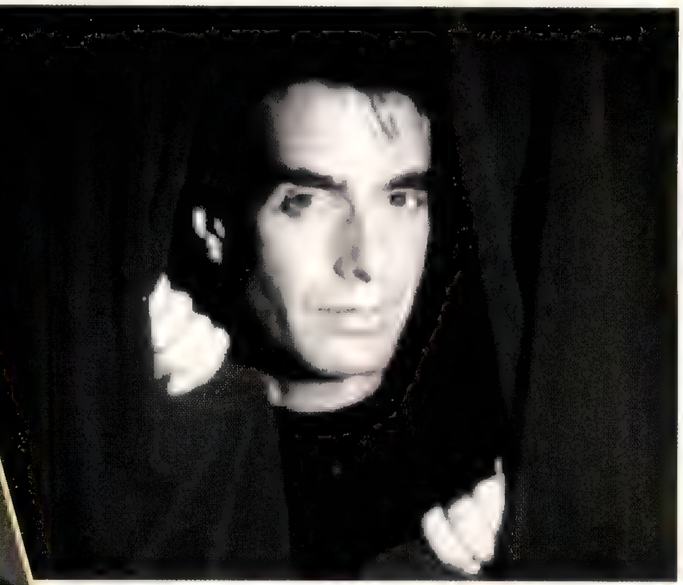
If you're still feeling altruistic after all that, The Spy learns that GT Interactive could do with your help too. The publishers of *Quake* have been hit by a $1.775 million law suit from developers Fenris Wolf, concerning how GT went about the canning of *Rebel Moon Revolution*, the proposed third game in the Rebel Moon series. From what The Spy saw of it, he's just surprised they didn't call it a day even earlier.

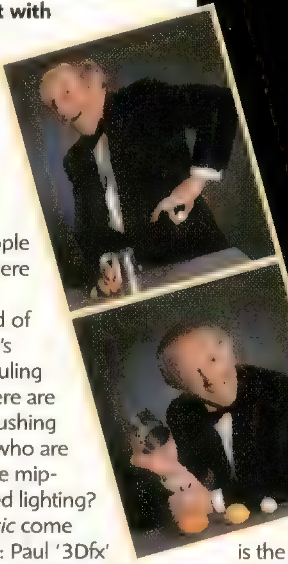
Last word this month goes to the Dallas Quakers, Id Software. On 16th Feb, Carmack and co suffered the indignity of having their Web site thoroughly hacked. For a day it read: "Free Kevin Now" – in support of jailed hacker Kevin Mitnick. If the FBI get wind of those responsible, they'll presumably be able to give Kevin their support in person. Or from an adjacent cell at the very least. Spy out.

THE TRUTH ABOUT...

3D cards

Ever wondered how 3D cards *really* work? Read on, and be amazed.





▲ **If you'd tried to explain the concept of 3D accelerator cards to 286-owning punters back in 1990, you would probably have been burnt at the stake as a witch. It's fortunate, then, that time-travel has yet to be invented, meaning that you can spread the good news about 3D to every soul you meet with complete impunity. But... do you really know what you're talking about? No? Then join us as we go in search of... *the truth about 3D cards.***

What most people fail to realise is that there is an almighty battle going on in the world of 3D cards. While 3Dfx's Voodoo standard is ruling supreme for now, there are other technologies pushing to the forefront. But who are the people behind the mip-mapping and coloured lighting? Where does the *magic* come from? You guessed it: Paul '3Dfx' Daniels and David 'PowerVR/TNT' Copperfield.

Not content with extracting rabbits from hats and copping off with models, these two powerful men of the Magic Circle challenged each other long ago to a battle of computer graphics – it is the sorcerers' way.

But it doesn't end there. In order to hide their use of eldritch magicks from the gaming public, they began inventing increasingly ludicrous words to explain their trickery. Tri-linear filtering, texture compression, gouraud and phong shading, mip-mapping – all these were invented by the two arch-wizards over late-night sessions of absinthe and Scrabble. Via clever marketing campaigns, these mythical words have entered into the gaming lexicon, and Copperfield's and Daniels' sorcery has been forever hidden from the public. And that's the truth.

GUEST SPOT

UNCENSORED!

Andrew Pickup tells us to get a copy of *Grim Fandango*. Phew, nearly made a terrible joke there.

As I live and breathe, this *Grim* is beautiful. Not by sparkling translucency effects, nor by texture enhancements, but by flawlessly simple design and amazing attention to detail. Filling each room with believable objects and recognisable equipment.

I have to admit having some doubts about LucasArts recently. *Curse of Monkey Island* didn't seem to fit with the previous games somehow, was finished in a days persistent play and barely made me laugh. With this thought in mind I loaded *Grim*. However when it took me nearly three days to crack Year One, and I'd laughed more times than in the whole of the prior game I knew this was something very special indeed.

And yet Year One was just to wean me onto Year Two, a vast sprawling mess of cleverly interwoven puzzles and misleading clues. Eventually I hit the immensely logical and constrained Year Three, speedily heading me off to the behemoth of Year Four. But wonderful pace and fiendish puzzles isn't everything as so many games have proved. As always Lucas fill the world with detailed and distracting characters, things to play with and strange things to do.

READER VERDICT

Genius is hard to find. Grab it while you can.

98%

THERE! UP IN THE SKY!

Matt posed the question "Who would win in a fight between Black Panther and Daredevil?" in the pub the other day. Daredevil, obviously. But if all the GAMER staff were superheroes, who would they be?

Mark's brutal pummelling of lazy freelancers makes him the Punisher. Matt is Galactus, but would favour snacking on bacon crisps rather than planets. Jes will be Lex Luthor, due to his mixing with the n'er-do-wells on the Nintendo mag (and, let's be honest, his hair). Ross' cruelly aristocratic airs would make him ideal as the Dark Knight of Gotham. Due to his love of obscurity, Kieron's Rorschach. And Jim wouldn't have time to be a hero, as he's lying on a beach in Australia.

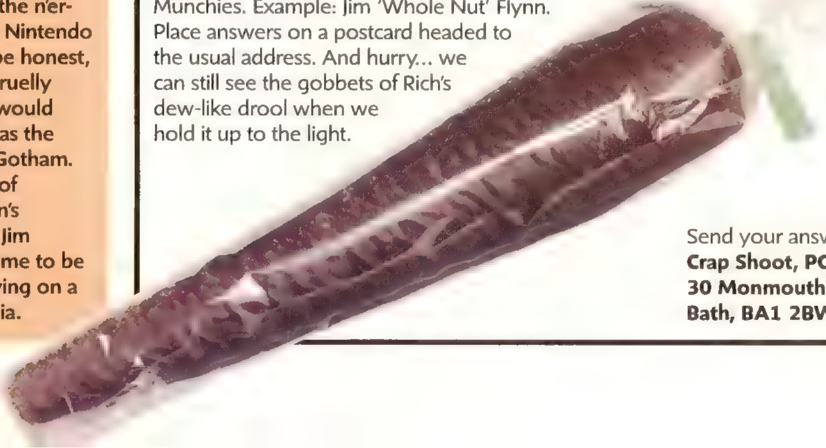
CRAP SHOOT

Pre-licked chocolate

We haven't got the stomach for it.

We're big health fans here at GAMER. There are few things we like better than to sit back and watch people eating nutritious foodstuffs while we're scoffing nice big bags of crisps and full-sugar drinks. On quiet days you can actually hear the arteries slamming shut in the office. But occasionally we feel guilty, wanting to eat something that at least *looks* good for us.

Which is where Project 2's giant chocolate carrot comes in. Pictured here in its full beauty, we've since given it to our resident connoisseur, Rich the Art Editor, to have a little nibble on. His expert taste-buds describe its filling as "coconutty, but not as nice as the inside of a Bounty" and its chocolate as "horrible". To win this gnawed carob length just match any five of PC GAMER's writers with the following choco products: Walnut Whip, Finger o' Fudge, Revels, Whole Nut and Munchies. Example: Jim 'Whole Nut' Flynn. Place answers on a postcard headed to the usual address. And hurry... we can still see the gobbets of Rich's dew-like drool when we hold it up to the light.



Send your answers to:
Crap Shoot, PC GAMER,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2BW

WHOLLY INAPPROPRIATE GAME LICENCES

Number 8:

Anna Kournikova's Pong

As Anna Kournikova's earnings from the ATP circuit rose to astronomical proportions, the Moscow-born tennis star sought lucrative investments for her cash. With characteristic business savvy, she soon spotted the growing trend for renovating classic videogames.

After snapping up British development house The Code Monkeys for a bargain price, and installing herself as Artistic Dictator, the pouting 17-year-old issued a mission statement to the effect that the company would be reviving the grandaddy of all games, the legendary *Pong*. Insisting that the game should retain its original production values, Kournikova decided that black-and-white, two-dimensional graphics were the order of the day. Indeed, the only fundamental change involved replacing the traditional bats, with their elegant yet functional design, with digitised representations of a smiling Kournikova.

When the game was given to the young men who passed for beta testers at TCM, however, things started going awry. Claiming the peculiar physics of the Kournikova bats impaired their hand-eye co-ordination, they refused to give the game back until she came down and explained. As far as we know, they're still waiting. Needless to say, the game was shelved.

THE GAMER RESEARCH LAB

Mon(k)ey (Island) can't buy you love

The GAMER scientific team research the questions of the day...

We've discovered computer games can satisfy many needs, but when it comes to base animal desire, compatibility problems with the PCs serial port are legend. No, PC games are of little use to you when you're zeroing in on an eligible lovely of the opposite squishiness. Or (dramatic pause, drums roll, the world holds its breath) *are* they? Hell, we'll give pretty much anything a go.

We adjourn to the nearest Public House to perform a series of experiments that may (or may not) answer the question "Can you pull birds with computer game chat?" And here is a rough transcript...

Subject A: unimpressed by Matt's tough-guy behaviour.

DUKE NUKEM

The Duke's love for the ladies is well documented, so we thought his mouthy attitude-ridden style would be a sure hit. Swarthy Reviews Editor Matt puts on his mirrored shades and is pushed towards Subject A at the bar.

> **"With a film-star grin, Matt turns and states gruffly: 'Hail to the King, baby.'"**

They exchange glances, but Matt's roving gaze catches the sight of something more pleasing to the eye. The mirror.

"Damn, I'm looking good."

Subject A looks somehow unimpressed. With a film-star grin, Matt turns and states gruffly, "Hail to the king, baby."

Subject A appears strangely displeased. She turns to leave. Matt fumbles for another line.

"I haven't got time to play with myself."

"Oh, you have, loser."

"Erk."

RESULT: Crash and burn.

MONKEY ISLAND

Perhaps Guybrush's naïve charm would prove more effective than the full on macho approach. Office music-obsessive fop Kieron bounds camply up to Subject B, placing hands on his hips in the Errol Flynn style.

"I'm Guybrush Threepwood, ghost busting stud. And mighty pirate."

"How nice for you."

"I'm on a whole new adventure."

"Really?"

"No, you're meant to say, 'Growing a moustache?'"

"Why?"

"Then I can say, 'No, bigger than that' and then you say, 'A beard'. Well, it was really funny in the game."

"I see. Two words for you: Go. Away."

A stilted pause. Inspiration strikes as Kieron remembers another line.

"I can hold my breath for ten minutes!"

RESULT: SLAP.

Subject B: responded to ill-judged boast with firm slap.

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

With little dignity left to lose, we gamble all on the sauce appeal of our squeaky annelid chums. Forcing helium into Ross' lungs to achieve the correct high-pitched tones, we watch him slither uncertainly towards Subject C.

"Hello!"

"Go away."

Result! Subject C seems to know the lingo, though isn't doing the voice. Heartened by this, Ross decides to push his luck and buy her a drink.

"Special Delivery!"

"Come back when your voice breaks."

At this point a large gentleman re-enters the bar and strides up to Ross and Subject C. He seems upset by Ross' antics, but, amazingly, is able to quote *Worms* talk too.

"Oi! Nutter!"

Ross takes a pretty solid blow to the face.

"You'll regret that."

Much posturing and arm-waving ensues. But the worm's lack of limbs spell disaster in a hand-to-hand combat situation. Screeching "Come on then!" our plucky invertebrate imitator decides to cut his losses and get away as fast as his belly allows.

RESULT: After fierce debate, we finally agree that Ross suffered a 'humiliating failure'.

Subject C: large male friend prevented further progress with violence.

CONCLUSION

One refusal, one slapping and one physical maiming. Compared to an average evening, a complete and utter success. We recommend that would-be Romeos go and memorise the entire script of *Grim Fandango*.

Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX

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I can't believe it, I researched for months to get the ultimate Corkscrew. On the first ride, 2 people died of shock, and the other 32 threw up their hamburgers!
In that case, you'll have to lower the price, rename the ride and do a recruitment drive for more cleaners.

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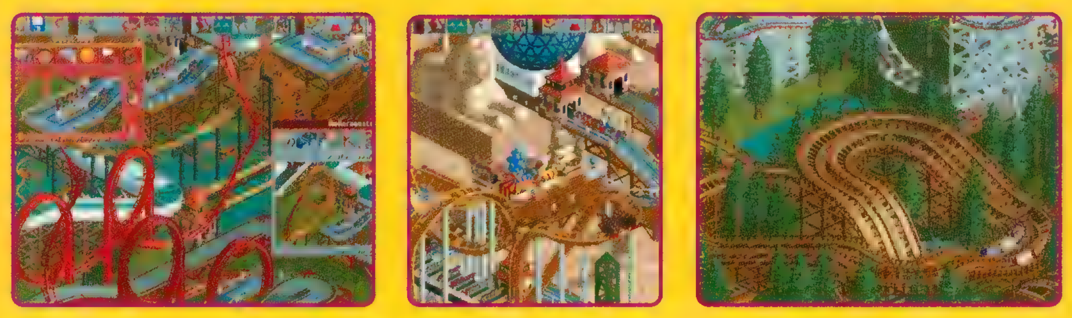
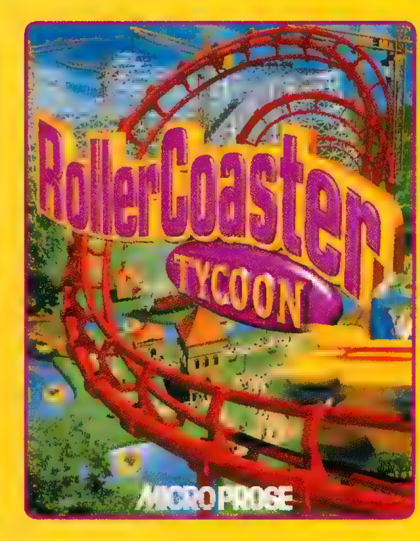
Sounds like there could be a Roller Coaster Tycoon in you itching to get out.

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REVIEWS

At last! Definitive proof (if it were needed) that British is best.

Hello. I trust you're well. Personally speaking, I've just returned from the States on a fact-finding mission concerning what's going to be one of the biggest games of this year. You'll have to wait until next month for that Star Wars scoop (oops, my loose tongue), but living on a breakfast of eggs over-easy, grits, potatoes and sour bread got me thinking about this month's reviews. Americans are widely regarded as doing many things bigger and better than us Brits. Breakfasts, however, they're inept at. And this month, we've also proved ourselves superior when it comes to PC games.

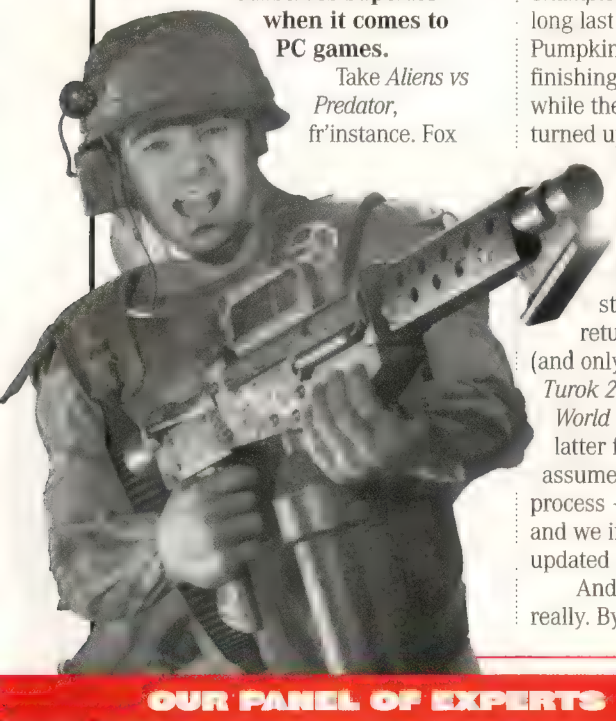
Take *Aliens vs Predator*, fr'instance. Fox entrusted it to Rebellion in Oxford, and they've done a sterling job creating a ridiculously fast, proprietary 3D engine, three disparate modes of solo play, and a multi-player game that allows you to solve the age-old "Who'd win in a fight between...?" argument.

However, it's the hard work of a single countryman which has won the coveted Game Of The Month rosette this month. Chris Sawyer's *Rollercoaster Tycoon* could have been a disaster – an ill-advised remake of Bullfrog's *Theme Park*. As it happens, the game's a highly polished strategy title that's as enjoyable to watch in action as it is to play. *Theme Park 2* had better be good...

Also keeping the British end up, *Championship Manager 3* appears at long last. Plus, our neighbours Pumpkin Studios have put the finishing touches to *Warzone 2100*, while the *Final Fantasy*-esque *Silver* turned up and smacked collective gobs, before riding off into the sunset. On a big horse.

Other noteworthy releases this month include Capcom's late, but still great, *Resident Evil 2*, the return of everyone's favourite (and only known) dinosaur hunter in *Turok 2*, and... omigod! *Superbike World Championship*. We'd left the latter for dead – a victim, we assumed, of EA's assimilation process – but it's here, it's great, and we implore you to give the updated demo a chance this month.

And that's it. It's been fun. No, really. Bye. **MATTHEW PIERCE**



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OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS

JAMES FLYNN has cleared his desk and left the building. We'll miss his dead eyes, pallid complexion, and aroma of Old Spice. Sob

MARK DONALD has been getting in touch with his roots this month. This involved gallons of hair dye and the attentions of Nicky Clarke.

MATTHEW PIERCE is, he insists, 'money'. Others disagree, pointing out that his behaviour is often most accurately described as 'cheap'

JES BICKHAM enjoys the finer things in life – a warm glass of Concorde, a single John Player Special, and a haslet sandwich

ROSS ATHERTON actually invented fagging at public schools. Why he wanted to clean everyone's shoes is beyond all of us

STEVE OWEN agrees with the old saying 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. His dog, Beholder, is becoming rather worried.

JON SMITH has been sleeping a lot this month. In fact, he missed February entirely, infuriating his long-suffering girlfriend no end

KIERON GILLEN is literally sleepless in Seattle this month. Disturbingly, he looks a lot more like Meg Ryan than Tom Hanks

HOW WE SCORE

90%+ An almost perfect game and one that will bring tears of fondness to your eyes in years to come. Only the classics score up here.

85%–89% An excellent game – technically impressive and very enjoyable. It will become the proud owner of our Game of Distinction logo.

70%–84% Plenty of fun to be had here, but something important is missing. If you're a fan of the genre, it might be worth a closer look.

50%–69% Flawed in several ways, but perhaps an interesting way to spend an hour or two. Make sure you keep the receipt or have access to a car boot sale, though.

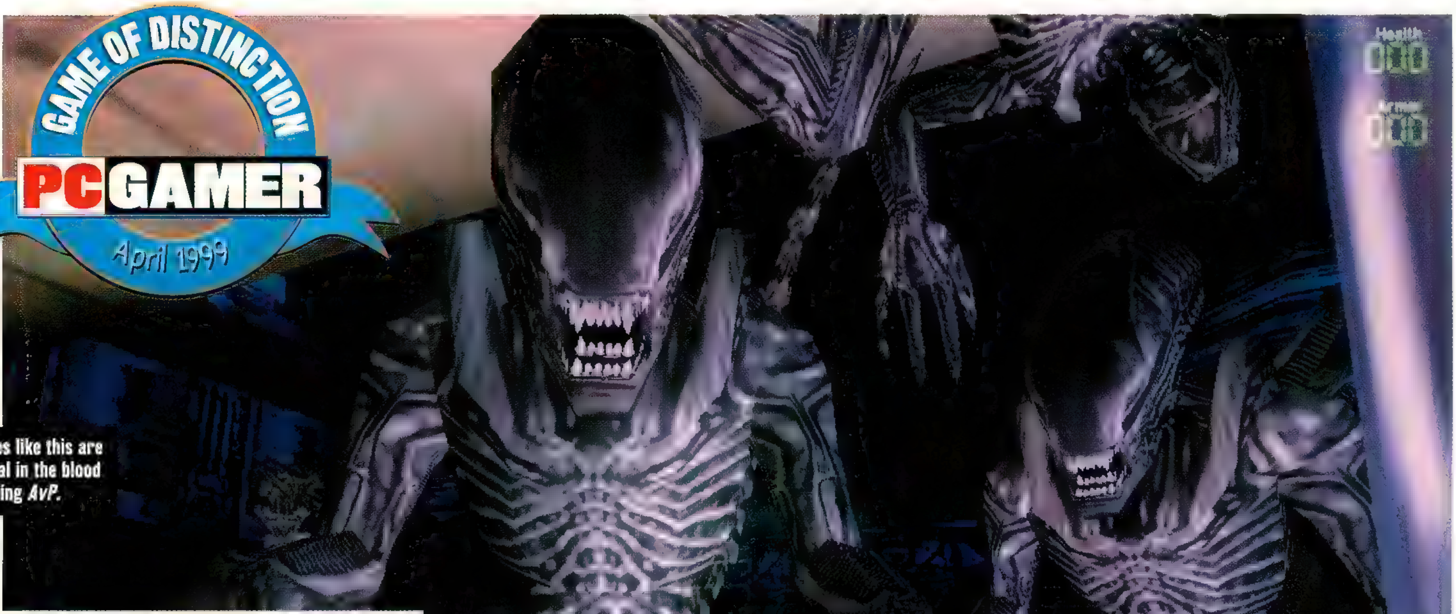
30%–49% Something has gone terribly wrong. This game doesn't deserve an inch of shop shelf-space and in all likelihood will be out on budget in a few months.

0%–29% All relevant design documents must be incinerated immediately and the programmers should think about their career. A stinky horrible crime of a game.

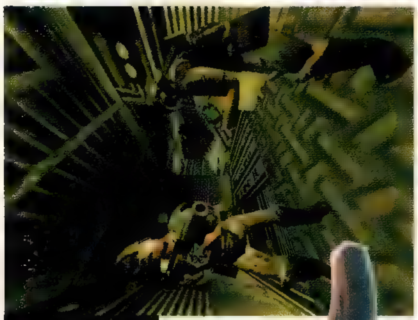
ALIENS v PREDATOR

In your bedroom no-one can hear you scream…

GAME OF DISTINCTION
PC GAMER
April 1999



Scenes like this are typical in the blood pumping *AvP*.

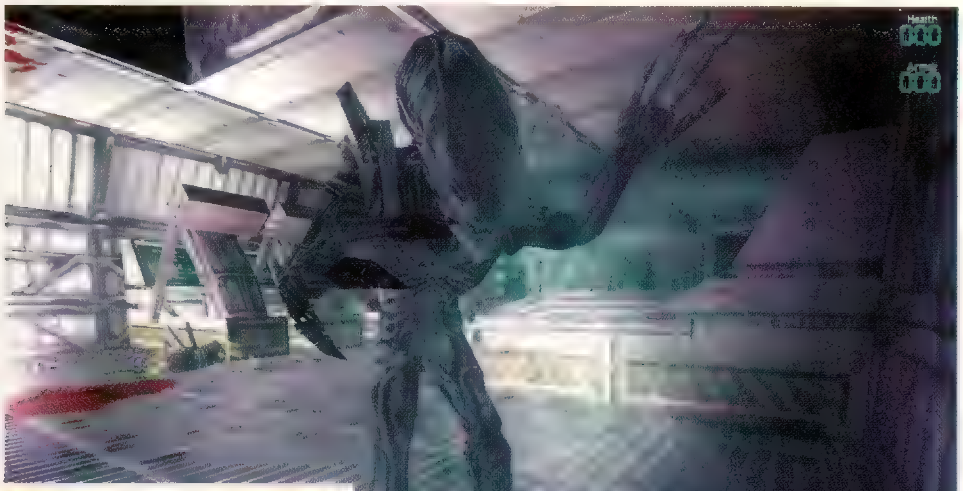


Aliens can crawl all over the walls and ceilings.

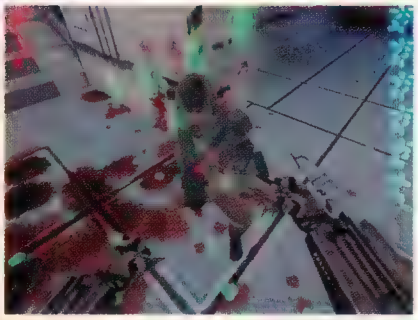
THIS is the game everyone wanted. The Star Wars universe is regularly plundered in the name of gaming, but two of the most inventive and downright scary sci-fi films of the '80s have so far largely escaped their development fate. However, as popularity of the first-person shooter continues to grow, publishers are scrabbling for a new angle and it doesn't come much better than this. Nothing could ever look as tasty (and handed on a plate) as a battle between Giger's Aliens, the eight-foot Predator and a bunch of hapless Marine cannon-fodder.

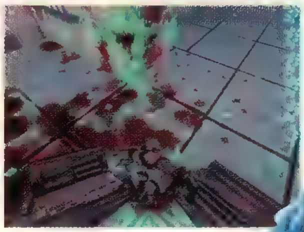
Aliens vs Predator has been in development for at least three years, which partly explains why the finished game hasn't evolved in parallel to the genre. *Half-Life* (if you'll excuse us mentioning it once more) is the ultimate single-player mission game, and *Quake II*, one year on, remains the indisputable deathmatch king.

Thankfully *AvP* isn't trying to take on either game directly. It is neither a story-centric game of atmosphere (which must have been tempting), nor a blast-fest (an option already selected and subsequently squandered with Acclaim's terrible *Alien Trilogy*). Instead *AvP* is almost a discussion on what would happen if these three races found themselves in the same place at the same time. Which would survive, which would dominate? Of

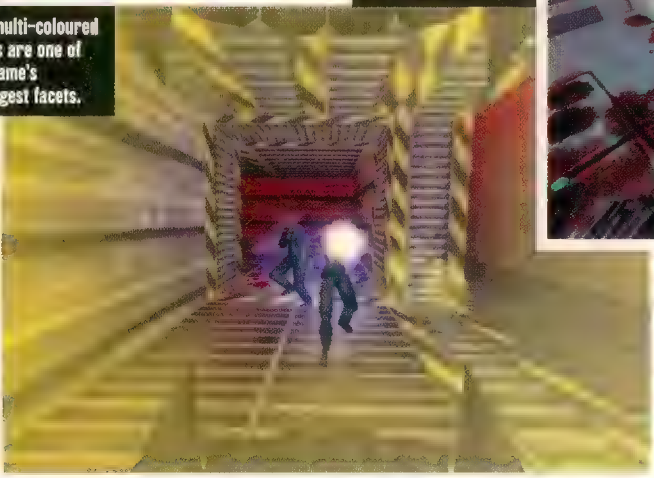


(Right) Before and after a Marine meets the Predator.





The multi-coloured views are one of the game's strongest facets.



Bitchin'

course, the answer was never going to be clear cut, and this is where *AvP* succeeds, but only in the sense that you despairingly feel that NOTHING WILL SURVIVE. It's a fight to the death, if you like, and a bloody messy one at that.

Rather than one long sprawling story from different perspectives, developers Rebellion have opted for a shorter tale in differing time frames, which can be played as any of the three characters. Choose the Marine at the start of the game, for instance, and you begin in a ship that has been infiltrated by aliens, and one from which you are heartily recommended to evacuate. Various mission parameters reveal themselves as you go. For example, rescue will only be forthcoming if you shut down a base's systems, which involves finding generators, behind this locked door, and so forth, clues which are revealed as you make your way through the map.

> **"A fight to the death, and a bloody messy one at that."**

The Alien, on the other hand,

⇨

THE MARINE

Attitude: Scared
Birthplace: Planet America
Typical phrases: "Let's go kick butt", "That rocks", "Hit me. Go on, hit me."
Likelihood of survival: Minimal
Ordinance: Pulse rifle, incinerator (flame thrower), minigun (fast rate of fire), SADAR rocket launcher, smartgun (automatically tracks movement)
Equipment: Motion tracker, image intensifier
Made better by: First aid kits dotted around

AGAINST ALIENS

Best weapon: Smartgun, although the pulse rifle's okay
Worst weapon: Rocket launcher in a small room results in mucho acid
Likelihood of survival: Good at first, minimal later

AGAINST PREDATORS

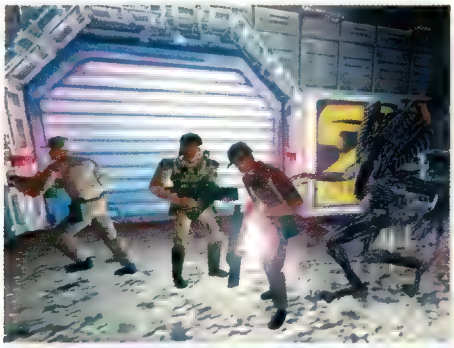
Best weapon: Minigun with its massive rate of fire
Worst weapon: Incinerator – you can't burn the Predator
Likelihood of survival: Minimal from beginning to end

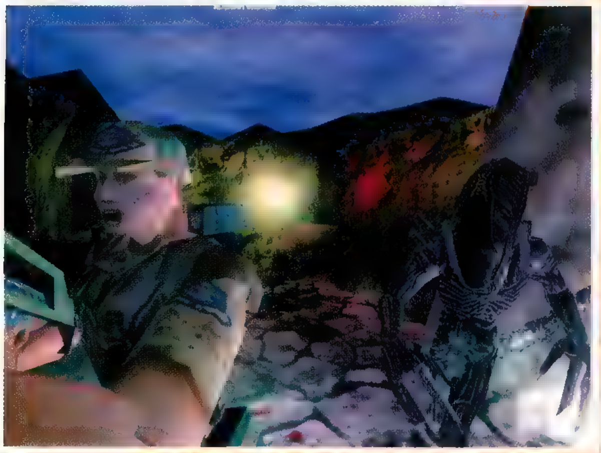
You may like the idea of playing as the Marine (the idea of blasting countless xenomorphs with the pulse rifle) but it's terrifying. The motion tracker, a kind of handheld radar system that scans the area in front of you, just like in the film, is simply a way of getting really scared, and rarely a reliable indication of being attacked. Frankly, the moment it bleeps you are either under attack or safe behind a door or wall.

The range of weapons is handy, although you'll start the level with just a pulse rifle (with grenade launcher as secondary fire). Ammo has to be carefully preserved – there's not much of it lying around. Make your first task to forget how tough humans are in *Quake* and *Half-Life*. They're six-foot weaklings here. Health and armour is quickly depleted, particularly by stray alien acid. Aliens can kill you in one go by a well-timed attack from behind, while the tell-tale three red dots of the Predator's aiming reticule means that your chest is about to be vaporised, or a limb severed.

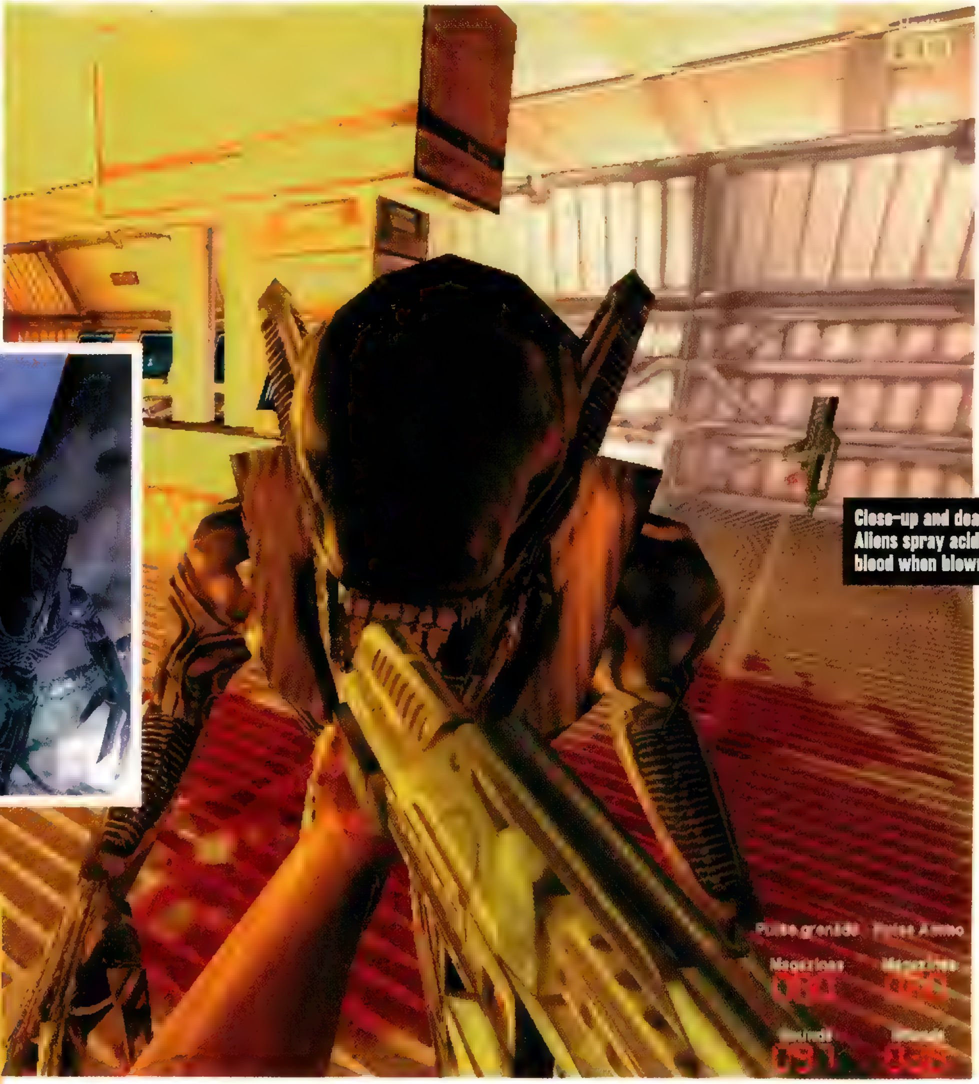
An army of Marines in multi-player can offer formidable firepower, particularly if one of them has a minigun, but you would be advised to control your firing pattern. Friendly fire hurts just as much as deliberate attacks.

Kieron's new hair-cut wasn't a total success.





(Top) Lining up to die. Marines are weak but have OK weapons.



Close-up and deadly. Aliens spray acid blood when blown up.

THE ALIEN

Attitude: Protective
Birthplace: Unknown
Typical phrases: Just screams, hisses and drools
Likelihood of survival: Less than minimal
Ordinance: Razor-sharp claws, razor-sharp tail, razor-sharp inner head jaws
Equipment: What? Oh, right, um, speed, all living creatures glow, and it can walk on any surface
Made better by: Munching on a Marine's head

AGAINST PREDATORS

Best weapon: Just leg it
Worst weapon: Insults
Likelihood of survival: Bugger all

AGAINST MARINES

Best weapon: Sneak attack, then burrowing jaws in head for health
Worst weapon: Duelling pistols
Likelihood of survival: Diddly squat

The world according to Aliens is a little screwed up. Hugely wide angle (and it does look exactly like the camera effects in the seriously underrated Alien 3 *(No Steve, it was crap. – Jim)*), everything seems a little further away than it actually is. But the Alien is so fast that nothing is more than half a second away. It's just up to you to control the movement.

When you run normally, walls cannot be scaled. But pop into crouch mode and no surface is free from your panicked scrabblings. Walls, floors and ceilings are as one, which can sometimes be enough to throw off pursuers.

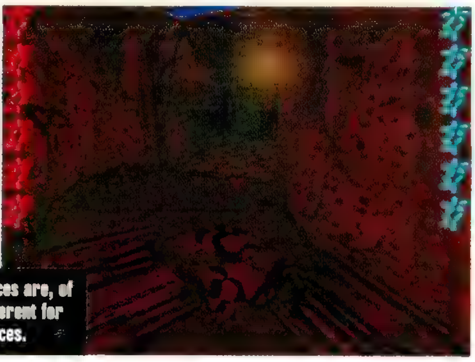
So how do you kill Marines? Their motion trackers are such that a sense of panic can leave them impotent to attack, rewarding you with the simplest of kills, and hopefully one that divests them of a head, and rewards you with health. But chitin-coated aliens are no match for a bullet or three, so attacks must be fast and surprising if you hope to get out in one piece. Don't forget, though. If you aren't going to make it, make sure you don't go to hell alone. An alien spraying acid blood is as deadly as an alien thrashing his claws

➪ begins by being commanded to rid your temple of the human presence that has just landed. It's clearly the same story from a different perspective, but the time scales of the missions don't precisely line up. It's not a case of attack or defend, but one of performing different tasks to culminate in opposing conclusions. If that makes sense. The Predator, meanwhile, clearly feels a little out of place. Like a game of Space Monopoly, he's just visiting, but soon finds himself drawn into a bloody battle for survival.

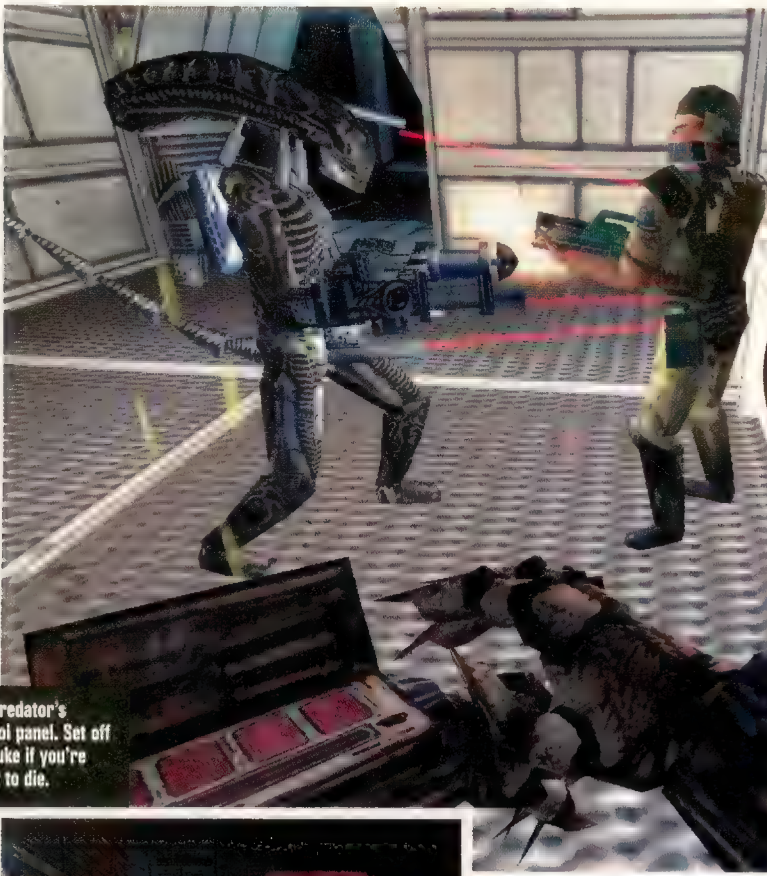
Of course, picking one of the three characters is like a dream come true for some people. You won't be disappointed with any of them, and will be pointing out references to the film as you go. The Alien viewpoint is spot on; its speed and agility is just as you would expect, including scrambling over any surface and leaping from one wall to another. The Marine has all the weapons you loved from Aliens, including the sentry gun and motion tracker. The Predator enjoys his familiar weaponry, but more importantly has the visual modes and invisibility that makes him so formidable. And yet none are more valid than the other, and none preferable. It's a superb effort to balance three such different creatures.

> **"A superb effort to balance three such different creatures."**

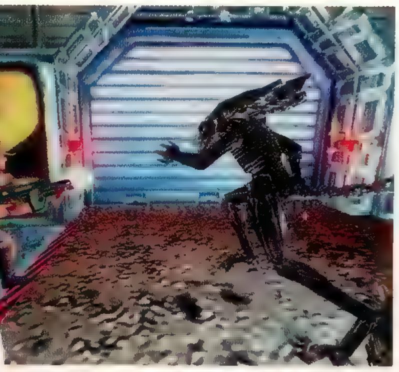
Tackling any of the levels (five for the Alien, six

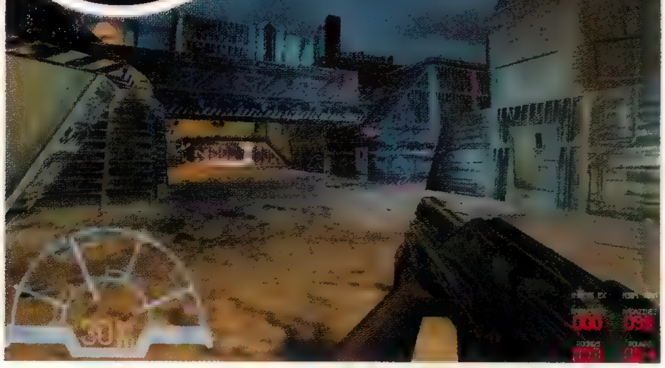


The interfaces are, of course, different for all three races.

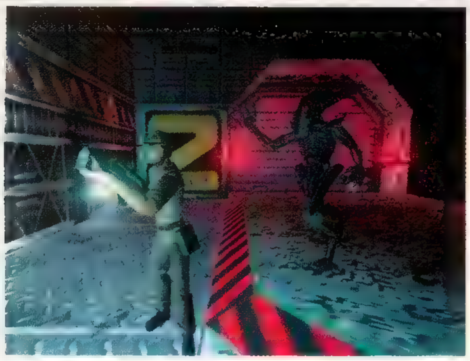


The Predator's control panel. Set off the nuke if you're about to die.





The range-finder is one of the best tension building devices in gaming history.



for the Marine and Predator, with five different bonus maps for each character allowing you to play missions from the other perspective) requires an alternative mind set to any that you have developed from *Quake*. As is increasingly the trend, a mindless gun rush won't work.

The main reason is that, as the Alien you will survive for about half a second of machine gun fire; a Marine can be killed in one go, while the tougher Predator is frequently outnumbered. Add to this an occasionally annoying but understandable distinct lack of spare health and ammo, and gung ho charging won't see you make Level 2. Instead, stealth, sniping, and, where possible, avoiding are skills that must be practised. Ideally, no-one will see you coming.

The excellent artificial intelligence the trio exhibit merely adds to this feeling. Characters aren't scripted and their behaviour isn't always predictable. Complete a level and you might learn where the enemy hangs out, but you can't assume to know how they will react to your presence. For instance, what was inevitable death around one corner may prove to be spookily empty in the replay, or perhaps they will come and find you a bit quicker. The Aliens, for example, follow pheromone traces, so that a gang is always likely to be tracking you, and an encounter seems inevitable if you hang around too long.

Unusually these days there's no in-level save function, meaning that some of the larger maps can take many replays to complete. This is a practical as well as ideological decision by Rebellion – the unpredictability of the characters means that save games would be huge, while the effective invulnerability it offers obviously reduces on the tension aspect. Imagine playing as a Marine, and your motion tracker shows that there are aliens round the corner or behind a door. Is it better to save and then attack them, or know that you've just played through a tricky half hour and you could blow it here unless you handle it right?

Considering that each of the three protagonists has their own individual characteristics and abilities, levels have had to be constructed with a meticulous eye for exact jump distances, as well as allowing the Marine lengths of claustrophobic, tension-heightening tunnels, the Alien vast areas of ⇨

FOR THE FEW

Of course, the real argument is who would survive in such an encounter – Alien, Predator or Marine? Of course, one of *AvP's* biggest selling points is that it can finally be settled with a multi-player game. Well, Fox pretend it can be settled. Obviously each have their strengths and weaknesses which suit particular playing styles. Our favourite is the Predator, although sometimes you just want to let rip with a Marine's pulse rifle. Do you ever want to be an Alien? There's nothing scarier than a co-ordinated attack.

Fox have included a number of multi-player games, including the obvious individual and team deathmatches, against human or AI players. There's also a number of specialised mission games, some of which are race-specific.

Obviously, whether the game is fast enough over the Internet (Rebellion claim that it will be, but we heard the same thing from Epic regarding the tardy *Unreal*) is difficult to tell at the moment. But on a network it was amazingly exciting. In one mission we played as a team of Marines defending a base against a seemingly endless wave of AI aliens, which seemed right out of Starship Troopers. Rebellion no longer have any plans to release a level editor, but we can only hope that a hacked version finds its way onto the Internet to encourage a wealth of new ideas and map designs.

It's a gory game, but we wouldn't have it any other way.

The scene in his public school dorm still torments Ross.

"Come and 'av a go if you think yer hard enough..." Repeat.

THE PREDATOR

Attitude: Noble
Birthplace: Unknown
Typical phrases: "Click clickety clickety click", "Any time"
Likelihood of survival: Verging on minimal
Ordinance: Wristblades (useless), pistol (crap), spear gun (lovely), shoulder cannon (messy), throwing disc (homing)
Equipment: Cloaking device (bends light around his body making him virtually invisible), Alien or Marine enhanced vision modes
Made better by: Built-in medikit, but it takes chunks from your energy source

AGAINST ALIENS

Best weapon: Spear gun, which launches the alien away from you as it sprays acid blood
Worst weapon: Wristblades, unless you need the acid to clear your sinuses
Likelihood of survival: Good at first, minimal later

AGAINST MARINES

Best weapon: Shoulder cannon for instant death
Worst weapon: Pistol – it's useless
Likelihood of survival: Reasonable at first, minimal later

When you first play as the Predator you have this feeling of invulnerability. Switching on the cloaking device and sneaking around (the faster you run, the more visible you become) grants, it seems, immortality, as you knife a Marine in the head, and then crouch behind a rock as the others fire randomly in a panic attack. The shoulder cannon is devastating, and can be used to either obliterate an opponent, or to pick off certain limbs for 'sport'.

The Predator exists on a common energy supply which is replenished occasionally in a level, often by breaking open control boxes. Health, cloaking and most of the weapons exist from this supply, which means that running out is most unfortunate. However, it does leave you with the option of the spear gun, which works on its own ammo supply, or the disc, of which you have just the one. The former also results in instant death, spearing various body parts to the opposite wall. It is indeed satisfying (and no, we're not Satanists) to view the leg or head of a Marine skewered to the plasterwork, a trail of crimson ooze leading back to the rest of the body.

The throwing disc is homing, and bounces off walls if need be. It too has rather bloody side effects, such as slicing the Marine or Alien in half. However, it does need recovering if you want to use it again so you'd better keep your eye on where it landed or have a metal detector and anorak handy.

All of the Predator's weapons rely on his three red tracking lasers, but this also means that you can never truly sneak up on opponents. And, for all his strength, agility, ability to jump from great heights and occasional use of a grappling hook (not available in every level), he *does* bleed.

Oh, and let's not forget the Predator's final say. In multi-player, if you know you aren't going to make it, set off your self-destruct mechanism and you may just take the buggers with you.

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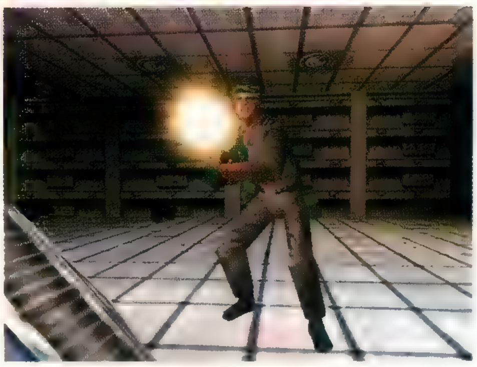
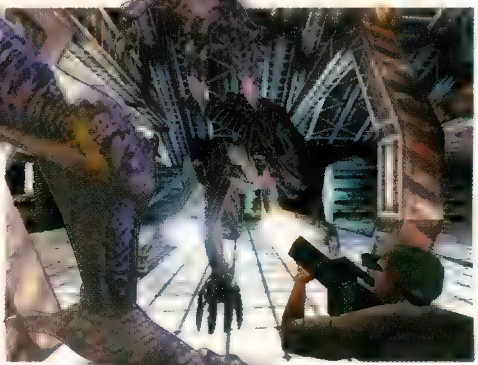
ceiling-level freedom, and for the Predator, arena-style locations suitable for the use of its futuristic weaponry and cloaking device. Generally the results are successful – environments are suitably cinematic, with the flashing lights and organic architecture of Ridley Scott's original vision in place, while the larger outdoor areas are handled with aplomb by the supremely quick 3D engine.

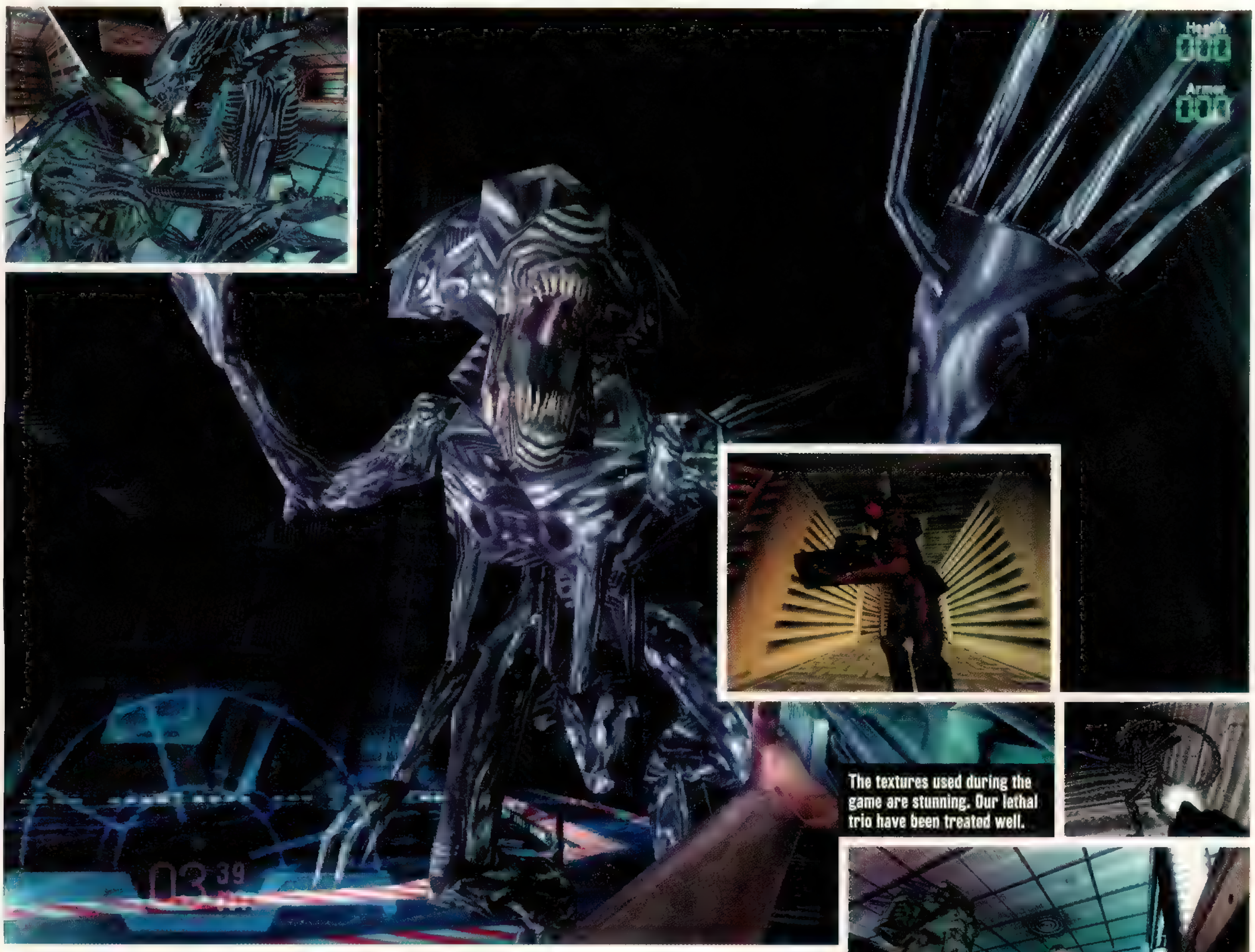
Less successful are the textures of your surroundings. Often too simplistic, they don't do justice to the incredibly well-modelled and animated figures; it leaves you with the impression they were simplified in order to maintain the breakneck pace. As far as linearity goes, *AvP* is only as guilty as its rivals. The Alien's levels offer the most alternative routes and freedom of movement, although even the Marine and Predator environments are designed in such a way as to give the impression of convoluted, tortuous passages and tunnels.



> **"Plays havoc with your emotions and nerves."**

AvP isn't for everyone. It can be an exceedingly frustrating game, and it is *damn* hard, but in many ways these are central to its success. A





The textures used during the game are stunning. Our lethal trio have been treated well.

stirring soundtrack and the prospect of an instant, gruesome death plays havoc with your emotions and nerves, and the scurrying of face huggers (instant death if they leap on you) is every bit as scary as those little shits in *Half-Life*.

It has to be pointed out, though, that this level of difficulty is going to disappoint and upset a lot of people. Without trying to sound too superior or patronising, some people just aren't going to be good enough to see beyond the first few levels without an awful lot of practice. For many, though, as the criminally unforgiving Commandos proved, many gamers are missing a true challenge, and that's what you get here. A bastard of a challenge.

If you've got the guts then *Aliens vs Predator* delivers a stunningly well realised and completely fresh 3D treat. Take it on. **STEVE OWEN**

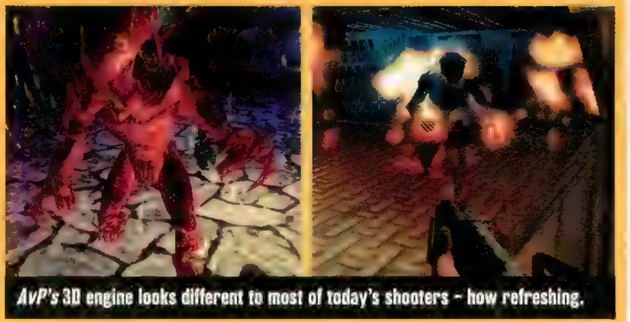
DO IT YOURSELF

One of the keys to *Aliens vs Predator's* success is that it uses its own graphics engine. Sure, there are few engines that have the speed or sheer number of effects of *Unreal* or *Quake II*, but they also have their disadvantages, speed being the greatest.

AvP's engine may not have the instant eye candy of the other two, but it is shockingly fast. The game has been so long in development that the engine was originally designed to work on the PlayStation and, gulp, Sega Saturn (the original *AvP* appeared on Atari's Jaguar by the way). To this end, Rebellion worked from the beginning to create something that could handle thousands of polygons and megabytes of textures. By developing a dynamic coloured lighting system the textures could be simplified to 256-colour greyscales (less memory intensive), and lit instead to give colour.

As is being heavily touted in *Quake III Arena's* engine, *AvP* is stuffed full of curves, breaking up the harsh lines of traditional level design. Aliens and Marines have over 1,000 polygons, and yet there can still be many on screen without slow down, while the massive Alien Queen is twice that. Explosions and fireballs are still considered to be polygonal shapes, so that chucking a grenade into a narrow corridor sends out walls of flames.

But it's the blood and bullet trails that look particularly impressive. All of the weapons permanently damage your surroundings, knocking out lights and leaving holes in walls. These bloody splats are transmitted over the Internet for multi-player games too, a visual indicator of just how damaged an opponent might be.



AvP's 3D engine looks different to most of today's shooters – how refreshing.

■ Publisher **Fox interactive** ■ Developer **Rebellion** ■ Price **£40**
■ Minimum System **P200, Win95, 32Mb RAM** ■ Recommended **PII 266, 3Dfx**
■ Graphics Accelerator **D3D, 3Dfx** ■ Multi-Player **Network, Internet**
■ Web Address **http://www.rebellion.co.uk** ■ Release Date **23rd April**

PC GAMER

Original, gorgeous and gory. The movie trio haven't let us down.

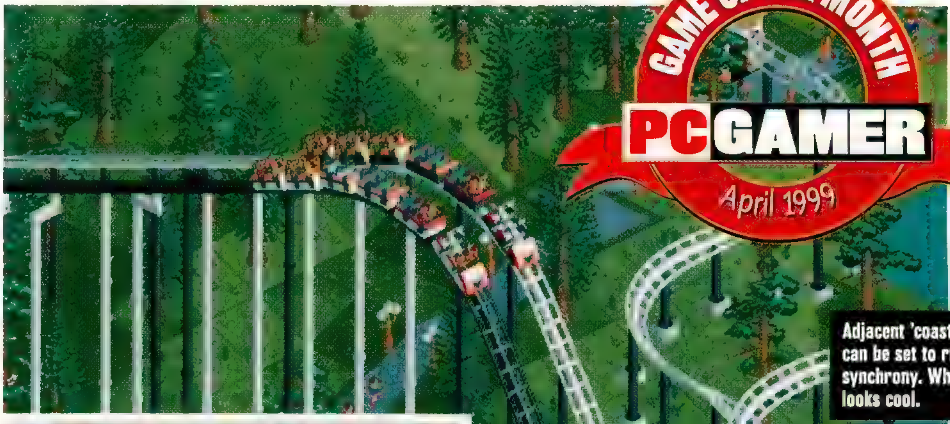
90%

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

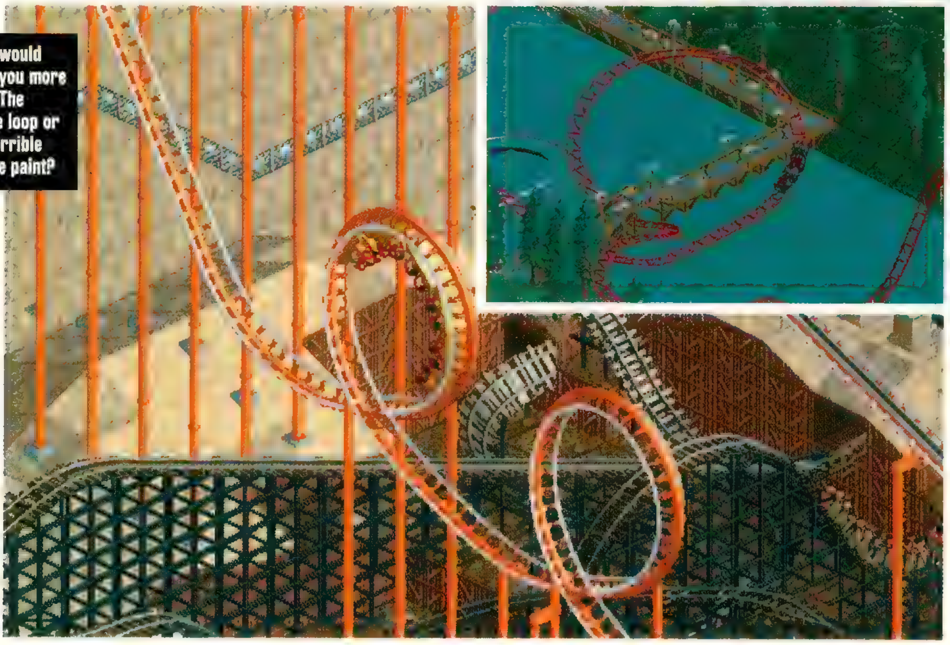
One ticket for the big fairground sim-ride, please.

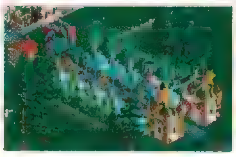
I'D better get the important stuff out of the way first. The question that every last one of you, from Mr Julian Foggart MP of Middlesbrough to little Jimmy Spratt from Canterbury, will pursue me mercilessly until I answer. Yes, my friends. It is possible to make your rollercoasters crash and turn their riders into piles of mangled computer-sprite flesh. It's tricky, as you can't remove an essential piece of the track mid-ride, but it's just about possible. You'll need to happily while away hours attempting to clock a body-count that'd make *Resident Evil 2* shudder in disgust.

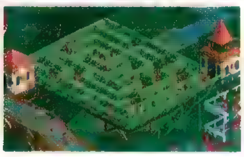
Of course, if you do that, you'll miss out on everything that makes this the most charming and accessible strategy game of the last few months (which, as you'll have noticed, have been so fine that, in years to come, it will have strategy connoisseurs getting all nostalgic and saying: "Ahh. The spring of 1999 vintage. I doubt we shall ever see its like again"). While both of last month's semi-*Civ* sequels contain more depth than this, and *SimCity 3000* has wider scope, it's *Rollercoaster Tycoon* that possesses the most charm. Also, of the four games, it's the one that I would most recommend to someone wishing to dip their


GAME OF THE MONTH PC GAMER April 1999

Adjacent 'coasters can be set to run in synchrony. Which looks cool.


What would make you more sick? The double loop or the horrible orange paint?

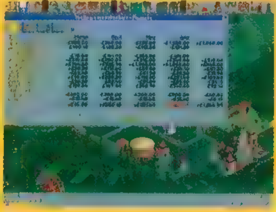


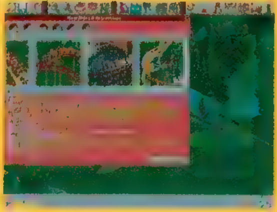


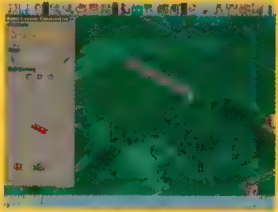
THE VOMIT MONGER'S REVENGE

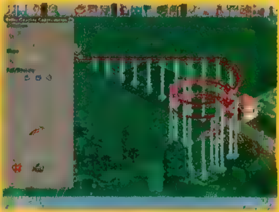
Right. I know it's kind of unusual for me, but I'm going to actually explain, step by step, how to play the

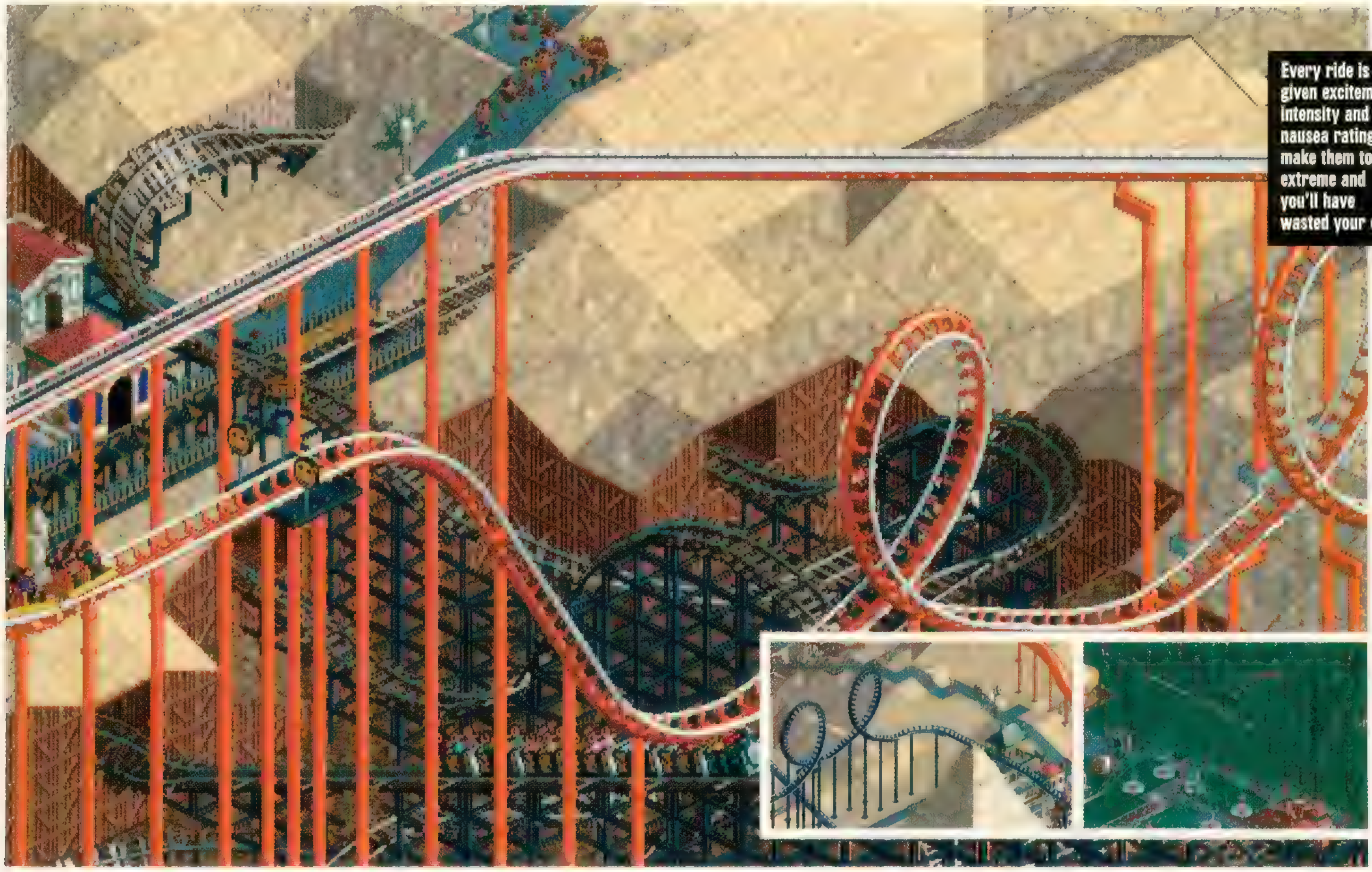
My park's in a bit of a bad situation. I've only got six months to increase the punters to above six hundred, so I plan to build a nice big rollercoaster to drag them in. I've saved a large area towards the rear of my land for this purpose. I'm putting it there so people will have to walk past all my other attractions to get to it, hopefully tempting them to spend more money. It's going to be a sequel to my previously most successful ride: The Vomit Monger. It is... The Vomit Monger's Revenge. Fear it.


The measly funds in my account won't be enough for my plans, so I quickly increase my loan by £10k. Sacrificing yourself for the entertainment of the others: that's the PC GAMER way.


The question is, what *sort* of 'coaster? Each of the different designs have positive and negative qualities. I decide on the steel one since it can be made bigger than any other one.


First thing is the station. The length of this determines how many cars you can have running on your serpentine creation, so the longer the better, really, to pull in plenty of cash.


If I had half a brain I would have planned my 'coaster on paper before starting. Since I'm a fickle creature, I just throw down things in the order they occur to me. First is a downward spiral.



Every ride is given excitement, intensity and nausea ratings – make them too extreme and you'll have wasted your cash.

Knuckle-whitening

mental toes into the world of economic management games.

What we have here is, at heart, Bullfrog's *Theme Park* presented with a *Transport Tycoon* control system. And those with long memories will recall that *Transport Tycoon* was really just an ultra-polished *Railroad Tycoon*. Which leads us to an inevitable question – whether Chris Sawyer piggy-backs on other people's genius. After playing *Rollercoaster Tycoon* for several days, I reached a simple conclusion. It doesn't matter. Mr Sawyer has an ability to take a brilliant concept and develop it to an even finer conclusion. It's pointless to claim that since *Railroad Tycoon* and *Theme Park* had the idea first they're in some way 'purer'. *Transport* and *Rollercoaster Tycoon* are just much better games. Innovation and creation are absent here, but it's a delicious example of renovation and evolution.

"A delicious example of renovation and evolution."

Rollercoaster Tycoon lets you 'be' a wallet-flexing entrepreneur, who needs to both fund and design a sprawling amusement park. At the start of each level you're given a number of objectives to complete within a time-limit, usually along

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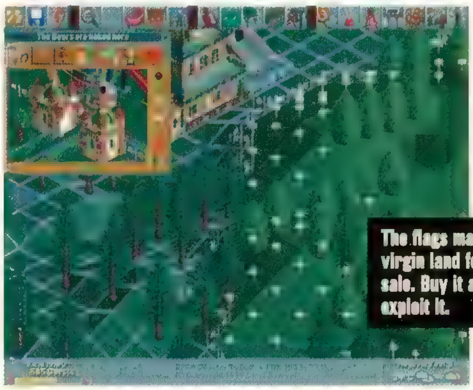
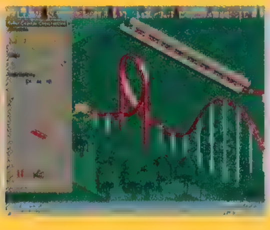
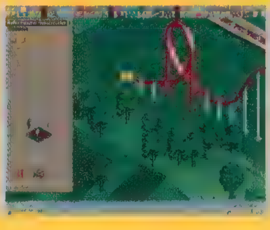


The flags mark virgin land for sale. Buy it and exploit it.

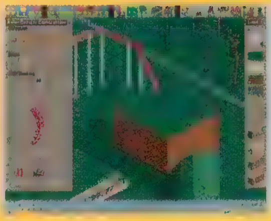
game. I know. It's a crazy idea, but it might just work.



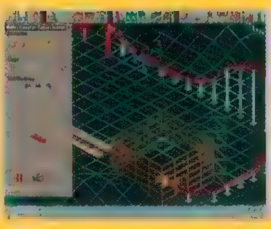
Next is a small hill to provide enough momentum to power the car through the loop. I won't know if it'll actually work until I test it. If it doesn't I can trash the ride and get back all my cash.



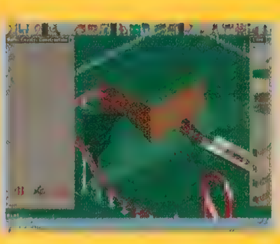
It's always nice to get a little extra money, so I'm adding a photo-machine here to take shots of the screaming customers as they fly past. I'll sell them afterwards to make enormous profits.



I decide to liven up the long curve into the station by having it dive through a tunnel. First, I simply raise the land to a suitable degree, adding some rather natty wooden support boards...

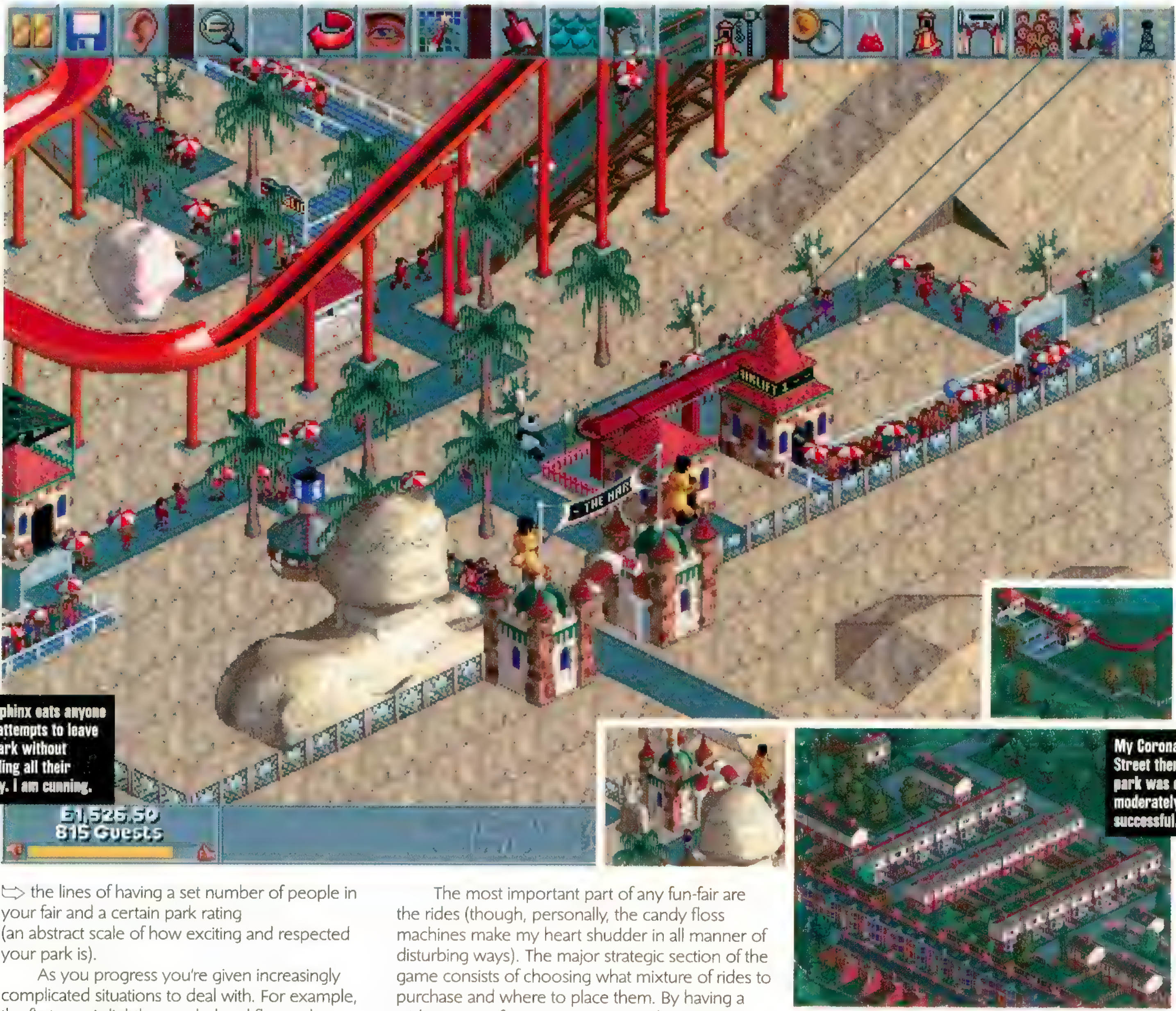


...then I change to the underground view so I can link up the track. We wouldn't want any crashes, would we? The tunnel is dug through the raised land automatically.



And lo! The Vomit Monger's circuit is complete. Of course, I have other plans to help make this the best 'coaster ever. First of these is to smooth out the top of that hill a bit, and make it more... hilly.

⇨



The sphinx eats anyone who attempts to leave the park without spending all their money. I am cunning.

My Coronation Street theme park was only moderately successful.

⇨ the lines of having a set number of people in your fair and a certain park rating (an abstract scale of how exciting and respected your park is).

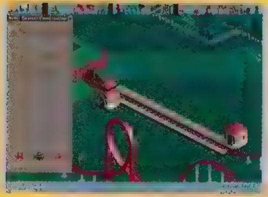
As you progress you're given increasingly complicated situations to deal with. For example, the first area is lightly wooded and flat, and can easily be cleared and developed. Later we see geographical problems such as having a massive lake smack in the middle of your land or gargantuan hills that constrain simple construction. Occasionally you're given control of an already-thriving park that you have to develop into a more profitable one. As you complete the basic scenarios, progressively more difficult ones are thrown at you.

The most important part of any fun-fair are the rides (though, personally, the candy floss machines make my heart shudder in all manner of disturbing ways). The major strategic section of the game consists of choosing what mixture of rides to purchase and where to place them. By having a wide variety of attractions you can drag in punters from all sections of society, and so achieve higher profits. The biggest rides are the eponymous rollercoasters, which are entirely customisable, and are such an important element of the game that I've given them the Biggest Box-Out In The History Of PC GAMER™ (below).

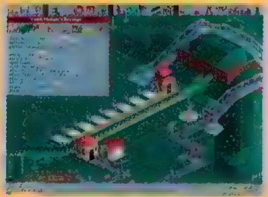
Many other rides, such as monorails, log-flumes and go-kart races can be developed through the same lego-construction method. Even on the more limited machines, such as carousels or pirate ships, you can change characteristics such as the length of the ride, price, and capacity. And, most importantly, you can decide on their colour schemes. Sepia and puce chill my soul.

The control system is based around icons and pop-up menus, which is friendly enough for anyone who's ever used Windows, but still attractive enough to stop you thinking that you're

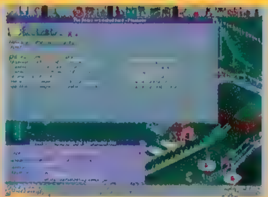
THE VOMIT MONGER'S REVENGE



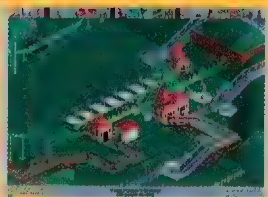
Every ride needs an entrance and an exit, otherwise no-one can get on or off. That would be silly, obviously, so I add them, and heartily congratulate myself for my nimble clicking.



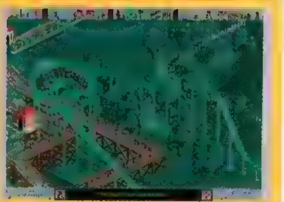
I've added pathways leading on and off the ride, and provided some decorations. I've changed the colour scheme to regulation florescent green, and finally run a test… and the ride is a success!



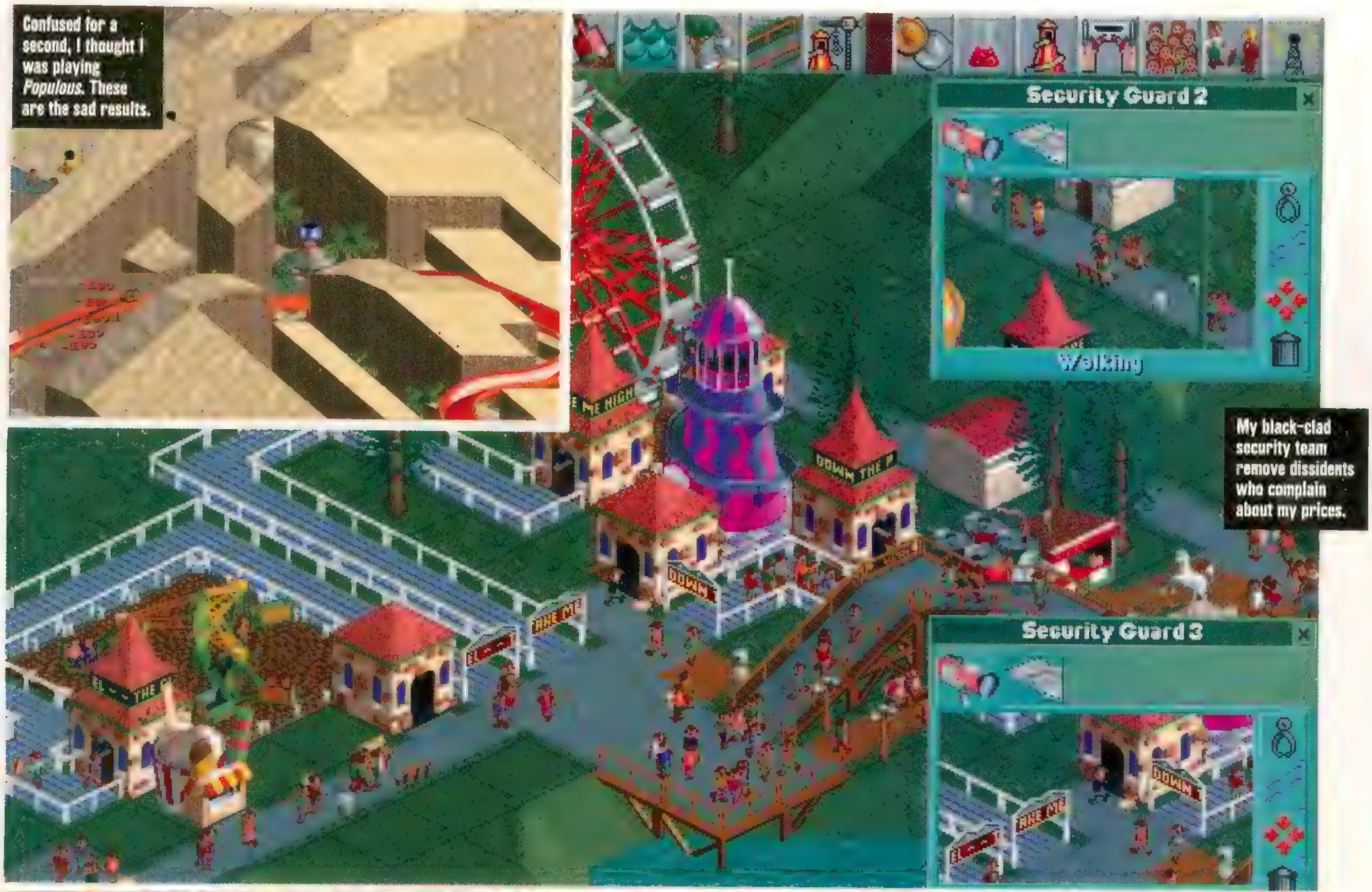
Of course, there's no point in having it if no-one knows about it. So I set up an ad campaign. The catch-line will be: "Blow more chunks than you thought humanly possible." Probably.



So people are finally on The Vomit Monger's Revenge. And I build a smaller ride beside it for people to have a go on to gain the confidence to wrestle with my fearsome beast of a 'coaster.

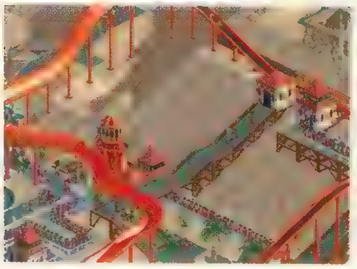


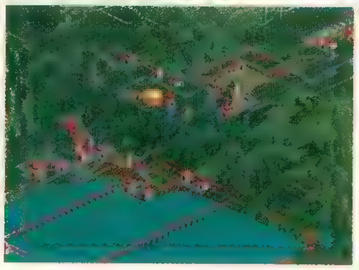
So they do. I revel in their smiling faces and I cackle at my secret knowledge – that I've allowed terrorists to place a bomb on the tracks to slay the President's daughter. *(Stop lying. – Jim)*

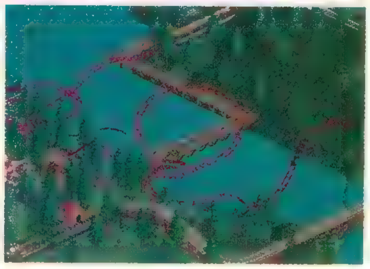


Confused for a second, I thought I was playing *Populous*. These are the sad results.

My black-clad security team remove dissidents who complain about my prices.







just messing around with a spreadsheet. There are, however, a couple of small flaws. The management of your staff of cleaners is annoyingly fiddly. A short-cut key to take you to the nearest handyman would have made emergency cleaning of dirty areas much easier. When you've laid out a complete ride, you're allowed to save it for future use, but upon reloading it, the game's incredibly bad at realising where it can or cannot be placed. Hills and other rides, above which it's capable of being positioned if you do it manually, will block its construction. Most annoyingly, you have to manually remove every single tree when placing a ride. Would it really be so difficult to automatically make them disappear?

But these are minor problems, and don't do anything to stop the game being more fun than being caressed by your favourite object of lust. My major reservation would be how long this thrill will last. Strategy games really require months, not days, to truly ascertain their greatness: after all, *Theme Park* was extraordinary, but its appeal faded quickly. The life-signs for *Rollercoaster Tycoon* look more healthy. It's a much more complicated and attractive game than its inspiration. Despite the mission-based structure, *Rollercoaster Tycoon* is really in the spirit of Maxis' 'Software Toys'. The real fun is in sticking together all these elements of a park, sitting back and admiring your work being enjoyed by teeming, delighted people.

What makes it more successful than every *Sim* game (with the possible exception of the *SimCity* trilogy) is that it remembers that the very best toys are endlessly fascinating to look at. *RT*'s parks are alive with these little people. You can't help but feel like you're a good guy, making their lives better (a feeling enhanced by it lacking many of *Theme Park*'s sneaky manoeuvres, like adding extra sugar to drinks to make your guests hyperactive). You're often manipulative in *RT*, but you never feel malevolent.

It's also one of the most compulsive games I've played since *Civ*. I spent the entire afternoon in the office desperate to go to the toilet, but was unable to tear myself away from the monitor to do so. Even now I'm trying to finish this review as quickly as possible so I can load it back up and try out my latest improvements on 'The Vomit Monger'. If this game were a real park, it would be Disneyland, expanded to the size of New York, with no entrance fee or queues. **KIERON GILLEN**

> **"You're often manipulative, but you never feel malevolent."**

- Publisher **Hasbro Interactive** ■ Developer **Chris Sawyer** ■ Price **£40**
- Minimum System **P90, 16Mb RAM, x4CD-ROM** ■ Recommended **P200, 32Mb, x4 CD-ROM** ■ Graphics Accelerator **None** ■ Multi-Player **None**
- Web Address **http://www.rollercoastertycoon.com** ■ Release Date **End of March**

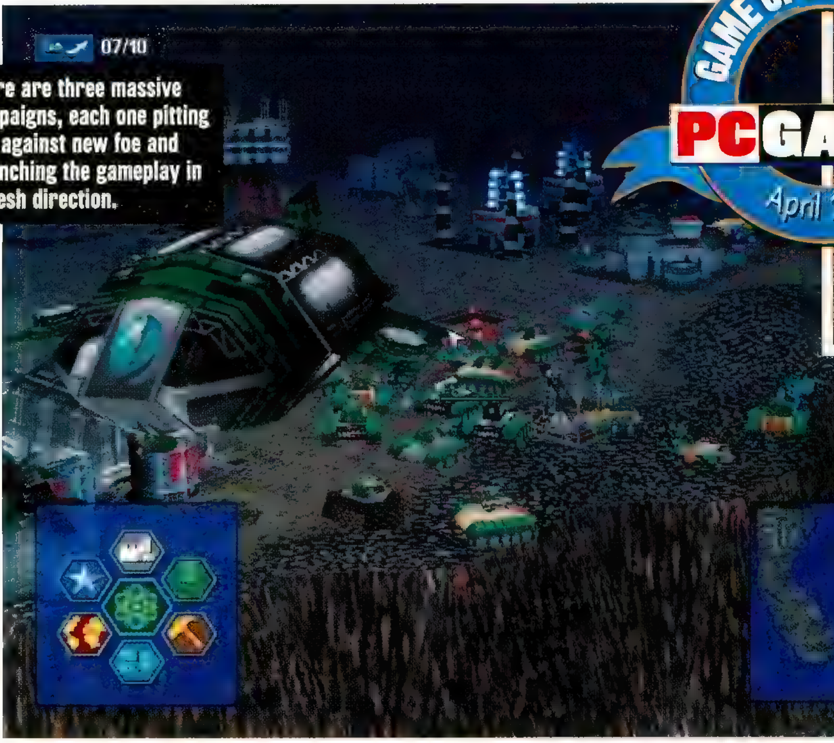
PC GAMER

Building rides: the ride of your life? You'd better believe it.

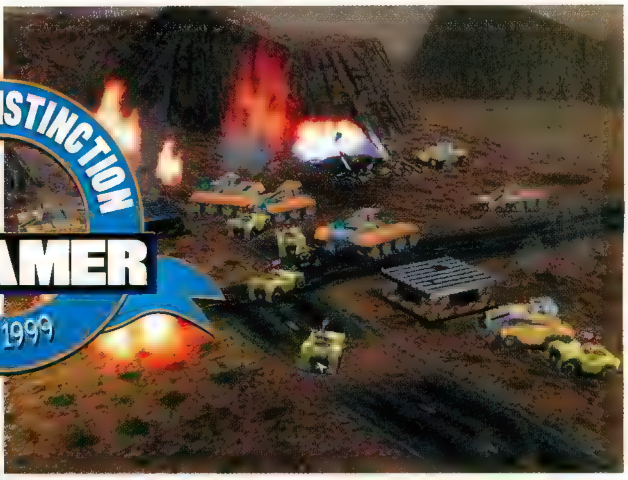
91%

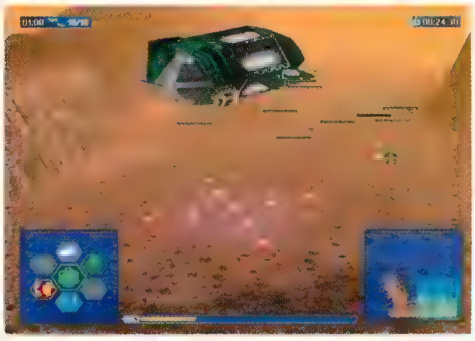
WARZONE 2100

Tiberian Sun's round the corner, but *Warzone* may have the drop on it.



There are three massive campaigns, each one pitting you against new foe and wrenching the gameplay in a fresh direction.





Drop ships whisk you away on tense sub-missions.

REAL-TIME strategy has taken more abuse than a tramp's trousers recently. A succession of gutless clones have lifted their leg all over its former glory, leaving the genre the most tarnished experience in shrink-wrap.

Thank god then, *Warzone 2100* is enough to get us wet again. Granted, it's not all that original – pump oil, build a base, research technology, and churn out tanks in a frantic arms race against an enemy doing much the same – but we still love that sort of thing, and this is the most advanced game we've ever played in the *C&C* style.

Foremost among the advances is the witchcraft of the true 3D engine. As in *Myth* and *Wargames*, a click of the right mouse button lets you waltz around the landscape viewing the action from any rude angle you like. And while this doesn't make an RTS game any easier to play, it does look bloody great. Suddenly the battle intensity heightens several degrees as you hunker down with your tanks and watch them snake along the valley floor. Then as they clash with hostiles you can spin round to the enemy perspective and witness a spectacular firestorm of rockets and shells rain down on their position.

True, graphics maketh not the game, but it doesn't hurt to look the part. And it adds immeasurably to the atmosphere when your lone scout tank, instead of pushing back black fog, trundles to the top of a hill and suddenly a huge enemy base yawns before him in the valley below.

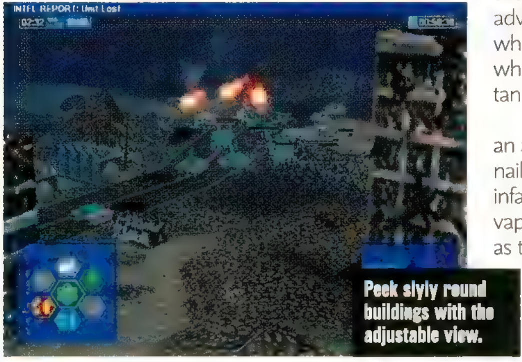
But it's not just ornamental. Having the freedom to zoom out and check any angle finally allows you to fully exploit terrain to your advantage. Within a few seconds you can see where a lowland area is dominated by heights and where you should position the artillery to create tank-mincing kill zones.

And when the battles get going they truly are an awesome sight. Polygonal units burst apart like nail bombs, VTOL gunships swoop in overhead, infantry scatter before heavy tanks, rockets leave vapour trail echos, wounded vehicles chug smoke as they limp from the carnage, and the entire screen shakes as heavy artillery pounds the earth. *Unreal* it's not but it's certainly the best action the RTS genre has ever seen.

The real joy of *Warzone*, though, is it's adaptability. You *can* play it as an old-fashioned bundle down the middle, chucking clod-fuls of tanks at the enemy in the hope of overwhelming their base, but if you're looking for a more tactically rewarding game then there's a range of clever options you can gradually learn, which, collectively, give you supreme control over your forces.

The most exciting of these is the dial-a-tank design system (See the 'Cut 'n' Shut' boxout) that allows you to customise your army by slotting together different component combos. It's been done before in *KKND 2*, but has never been so slickly integrated into a game. You'll be tinkering with the possibilities and fine tuning your tactics for months particularly in the multi-player game, where the appearance of a previously unknown unit type can cause mass panic among opponents. We fear what we don't understand.

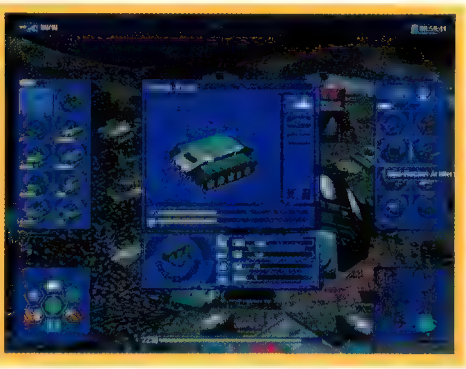
The weapon balance appears more delicately poised than in other games too. Even *Total Annihilation* eventually succumbed to the irresistible Core super tanks, but, in *Warzone*, tank cannon are virtually useless against massed infantry. Whereas the infantry can humble the heavies with their bazookas. The only answer is mixed units with machine gunners hosing down the little guys while being supported by armour-



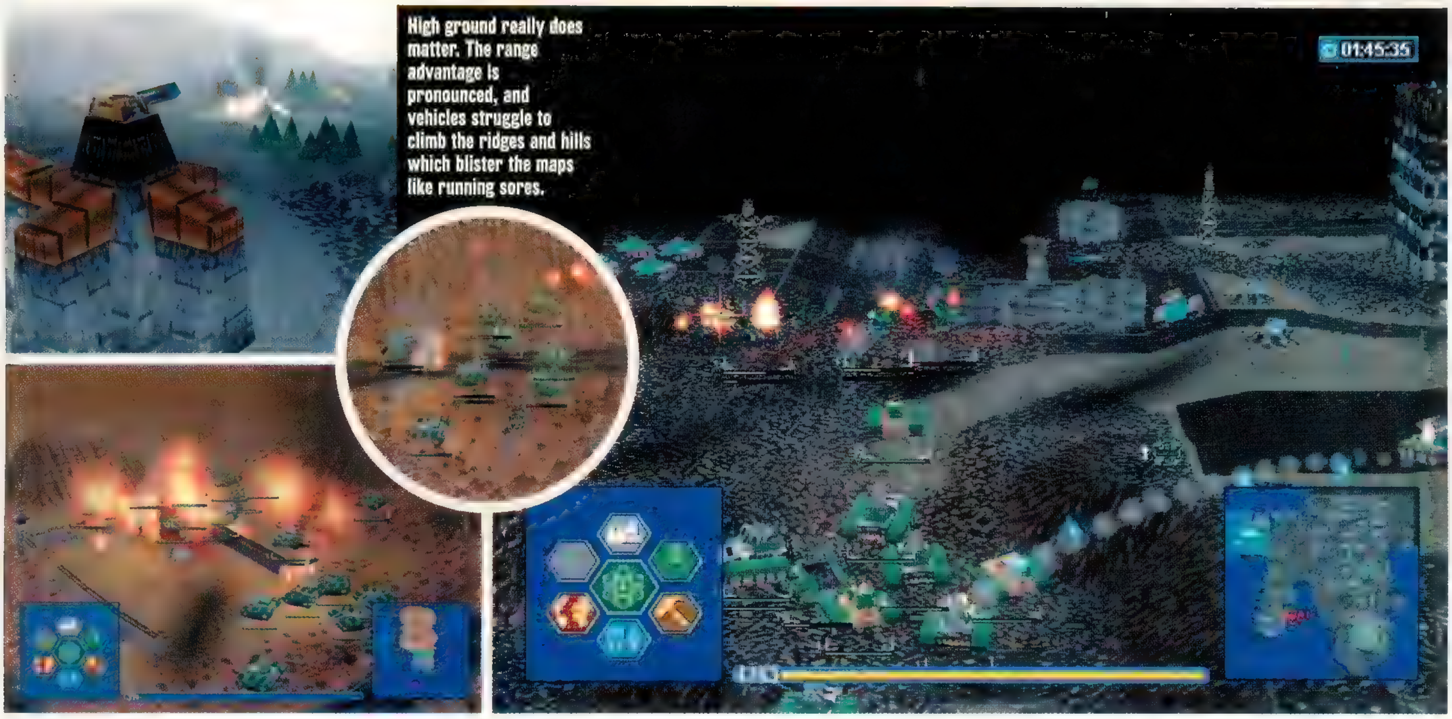
Peek slyly round buildings with the adjustable view.

CUT 'N' SHUT

Researching new technologies enables you to discover new unit components you can then combine into your own customised engines o' war. Within three clicks of the mouse you'll have selected the propulsion system (wheels, tracks, hover, or flight), the chassis (light, medium, heavy) and the weaponry (apparently over 100 types, including a bewildering array of rocket launchers, lasers, flame throwers and howitzers). Then you can swiftly switch to your factories and get churning them out. It's a brilliant system that enables you to experiment to your heart's content and rapidly adjust your tactics mid-game. Heavy tanks being destroyed by tank-buster infantry? Then design hard hitting gunship with chaingun and mow them down.



You don't see this every day.



High ground really does matter. The range advantage is pronounced, and vehicles struggle to climb the ridges and hills which blister the maps like running sores.

Commanding

busting tanks. It's still early days, but our preliminary findings suggest we'll be rapt by the deathmatch game for many moons to come.

Particularly as *Warzone's* brimming with all the touches we've demanded for ages. Customisable AI can tell your tanks to automatically return for repair when they've been heavily damaged; mobile repair units automatically fix vehicles in the field (so you can finally keep experienced troops alive); VTOLs can be given intercept missions so they will independently attack incoming tank columns; and massed artillery can stay behind the front lines by locking to a radar unit that brings down fire support as you command. At last, it's possible to run a vast battle and empire-build at the same time without having to wet nurse every attack yourself.

"Brimming with all the touches we've demanded for ages."

The only danger is that you could be swamped trying to cope with all the new elements. Fortunately the interface is brilliantly designed to keep frustration at bay. The campaigns are seamless too, with a strong story line running through every mission. And, in a master-stroke, each mission unfolds directly from the last, so your base evolves along with the campaign, rather than forcing you to start from scratch every time.

My only reservation is that RTS clones may be starting to wear a bit thin for some people. Despite the lavish design, *Warzone* is still just glorified *C&C* underneath it all. If you've had enough of that, then don't bother with this; but if you loved *Total Annihilation* and *Starcraft*, and still want more, then *Warzone* should be your next stop. Regardless of *Tiberian Sun's* looming shadow.

MARK DONALD

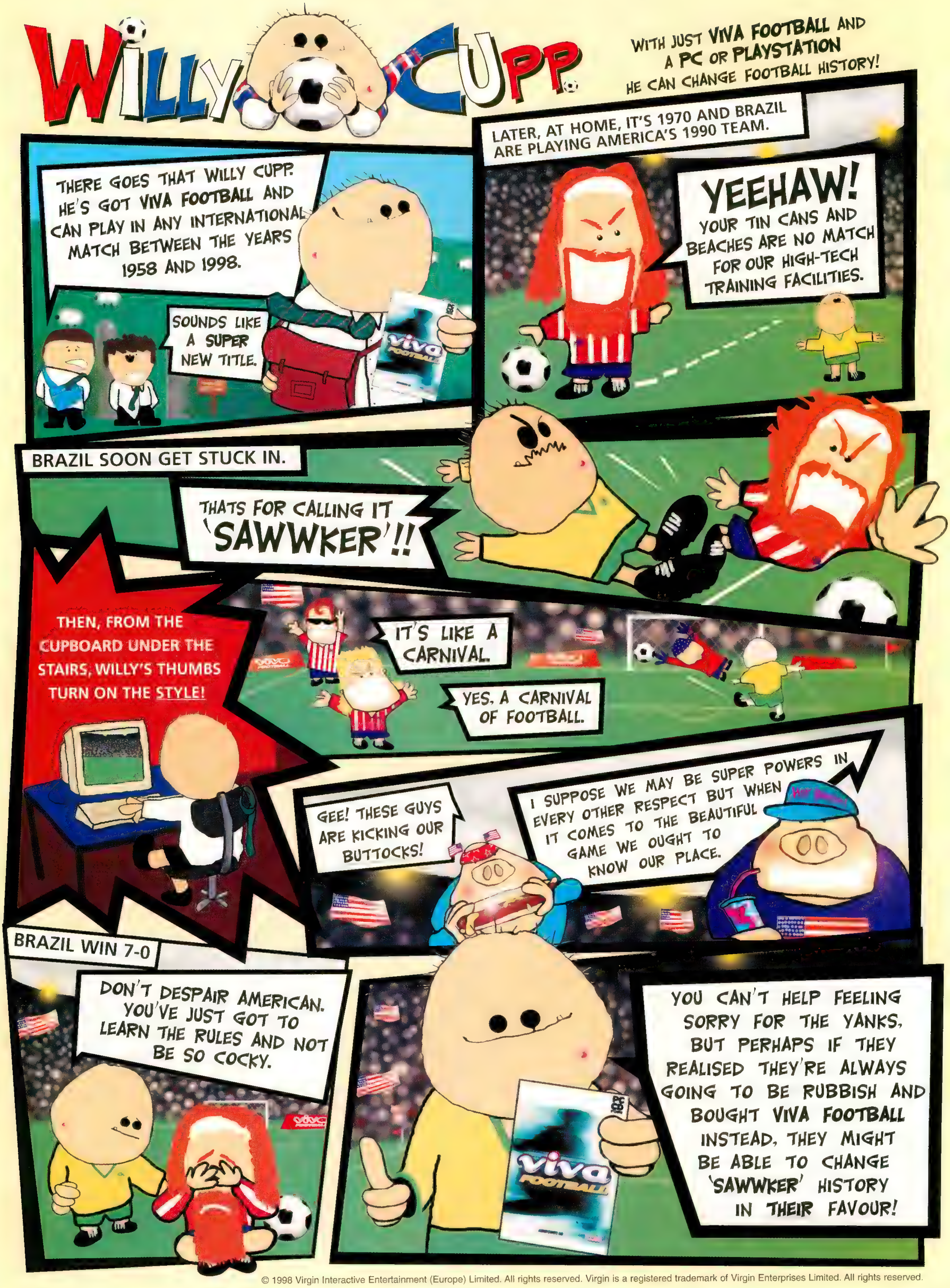
Destroying enemy bases often uncovers new technology.

■ Publisher **Eidos** ■ Developer **Pumpkin** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P166, 32Mb RAM, x8 CD-ROM** ■ Recommended **P233, x16 CD, PCI 64-bit sound card** ■ Graphics Accelerator **4Mb D3D, 3Dfx** ■ Multi-Player **Internet, network, serial cable, modem** ■ Web Address **www.eidosgames.com** ■ Release Date **26th March**

PC GAMER

The best RTS game you can buy right now. But for how long?

90%


WILLY CUPP
WITH JUST VIVA FOOTBALL AND A PC OR PLAYSTATION HE CAN CHANGE FOOTBALL HISTORY!
THERE GOES THAT WILLY CUPP. HE'S GOT VIVA FOOTBALL AND CAN PLAY IN ANY INTERNATIONAL MATCH BETWEEN THE YEARS 1958 AND 1998.
SOUNDS LIKE A SUPER NEW TITLE.
LATER, AT HOME, IT'S 1970 AND BRAZIL ARE PLAYING AMERICA'S 1990 TEAM.
YEEHAW! YOUR TIN CANS AND BEACHES ARE NO MATCH FOR OUR HIGH-TECH TRAINING FACILITIES.
BRAZIL SOON GET STUCK IN.
THATS FOR CALLING IT 'SAWWKER'!!
THEN, FROM THE CUPBOARD UNDER THE STAIRS, WILLY'S THUMBS TURN ON THE STYLE!
IT'S LIKE A CARNIVAL.
YES, A CARNIVAL OF FOOTBALL.
GEE! THESE GUYS ARE KICKING OUR BUTTOCKS!
I SUPPOSE WE MAY BE SUPER POWERS IN EVERY OTHER RESPECT BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE BEAUTIFUL GAME WE OUGHT TO KNOW OUR PLACE.
BRAZIL WIN 7-0
DON'T DESPAIR AMERICAN. YOU'VE JUST GOT TO LEARN THE RULES AND NOT BE SO COCKY.
YOU CAN'T HELP FEELING SORRY FOR THE YANKS, BUT PERHAPS IF THEY REALISED THEY'RE ALWAYS GOING TO BE RUBBISH AND BOUGHT VIVA FOOTBALL INSTEAD, THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO CHANGE 'SAWWKER' HISTORY IN THEIR FAVOUR!
viva FOOTBALL

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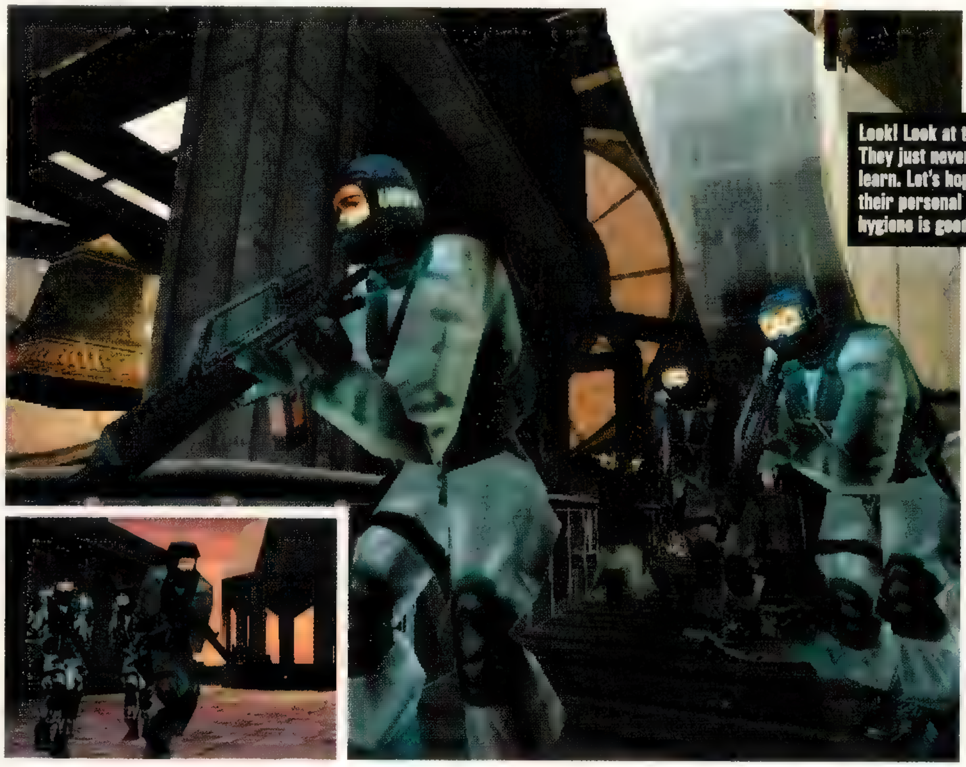
RAINBOW SIX: EAGLE WATCH

"Look, Eddie, can you not stand so close to me?"
"Sorry, Bob. But you smell so nice..."

YOU'LL either be terrified or delighted to know that they're still there, hunched behind you, fearsome, scuttling, dead-eyed men o' death. And, hearteningly, they're still apt to go trotting, single-file, into a lone terrorist's field of fire. And get mown down within a split-second.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, *Rainbow Six* is back, in expanded, mission-pack form. Take 2's game of complicated, waypoint-heavy assault-planning, single-bullet deaths and stringent 'realism' received a favourable reception from us, in issue 62, despite several irritating flaws – these mostly concerning occasionally wayward and never-predictable AI. And if you were amused by your team-mates antics in the original game, you'll be pleased to know that such schizophrenic behaviour is still pretty much intact, leading to all sorts of jolly hostage-rescuing bungles and bomb-defusing "dohs", best exemplified by one of *Eagle Watch's* five new free world-defending missions. Mission 3, 'Lion's Den', has you trying to liberate the Houses of Parliament from the clutches of Irish terrorists (!). Part of this involves wending your way up many narrow staircases to prevent Big Ben from an undignified demolition. And – guess what? – unless you take point yourself and clear any resistance, no matter how well-laid your plan of attack is, your crack squad will *insist* on getting shot before you get to the top. Cretins.

> **"Plays exactly the same as the original."**



Look! Look at them! They just never learn. Let's hope their personal hygiene is good.

Nails

Elsewhere, it's pretty much business as normal, too. *Eagle Watch* plays exactly the same as the original *Rainbow Six*, and what you actually get for your money is the aforementioned five new missions, four new operatives to send to their deaths (including the splendidly named Homer Johnston), three new weapons, six more multi-player options and – hurrah! – two new training areas. It's a fairly modest bundle, and, for the single player, doesn't offer the challenge or longevity of equivalent expansions – a shining example being *Jedi Knight's Mysteries Of The Sith* add-on. Although, saying that, developers Red Storm have come up with a clutch of markedly superior scenarios and decided to have a bit more fun. Hence the preposterously enjoyable first mission, wherein hostages must be saved from their captivity *within a space shuttle*. Ridiculous – but great fun.

The Seventies revival disco was going fine until the small-arms fire went off.

Also included is a spectator mode – Full Watch – in which you plan your attack, and sit back and watch the whole thing take place. Which makes a great dry-run before you decide to handle the mission personally, enabling you to make more judgements on successfully tweaking your grand scheme. And *Eagle Watch* is as unforgiving as its father game ever was, although it's over far too soon. Which makes it, ultimately and unequivocally, one for the diehard *Rainbow Sixer* in your life

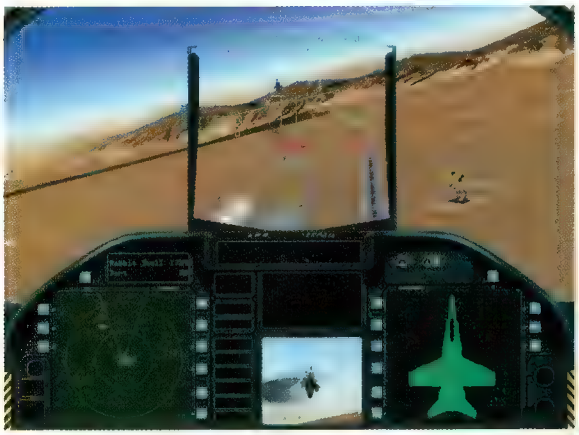
JES BICKHAM

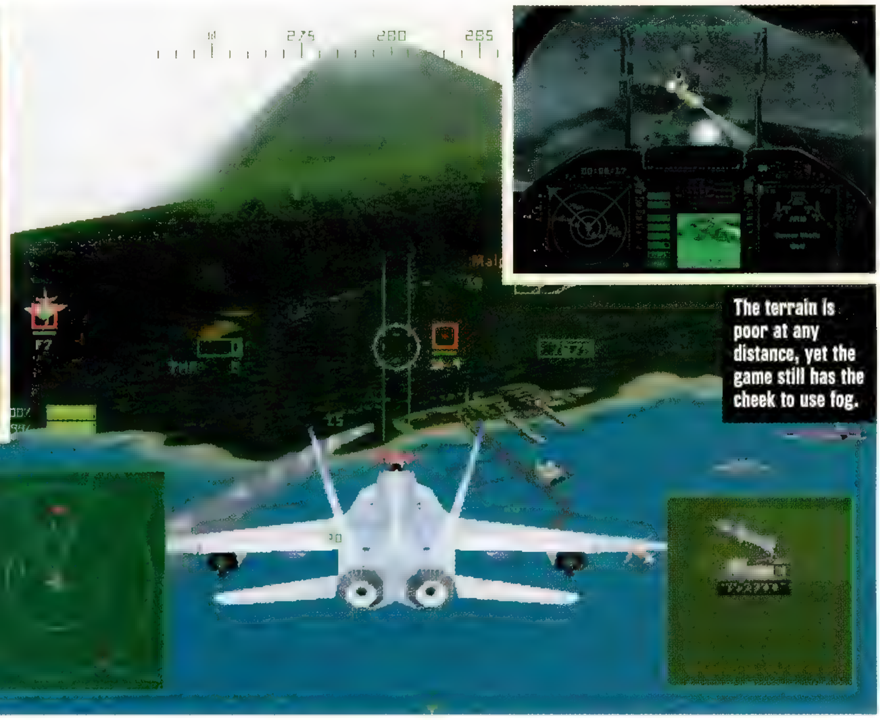
■ Publisher **Take 2** ■ Developer **Red Storm** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P166, 16Mb RAM, 3D card, Rainbow Six** ■ Recommended **P200, 32Mb RAM, 3D card, Rainbow Six** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx** ■ Multi-Player **Network, Internet** ■ Web Address **http://www.redstorm.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER
An adept extension of the original game, but a little on the slender side.
80%

TOP GUN HORNET'S NEST

Not even luke-warm on the heels of the 1986 movie, MicroProse rolls out another one of its arcade-orientated *Top Gun* games. Has *Hornet's Nest* improved on the original?





The terrain is poor at any distance, yet the game still has the cheek to use fog.

LESS a 'highway to the danger zone', more a half-forgotten B-road with few passing places, MicroProse wheels its dusty *Top Gun* licence out for another bash at greatness. Nothing wrong with that. The first game, *Top Gun: Fire At Will*, was a curiously playable mix of cinematic storytelling, arcade-style action and cutting edge 3D.

Based around the gung-ho 1986 movie, you stepped into the role of the Tom Cruise character, Maverick, training at the celebrated Top Gun Fighter School before testing your flying skills against deadly, MiG-flying opponents. It had F-14s. It had digitised speech. It even had the old movie soundtrack. High on atmosphere, developer Spectrum Holobyte had basically taken the two-hour Top Gun film and stretched it into a 40-hour game. At its simplest, *Top Gun* was *Wing Commander* with planes.

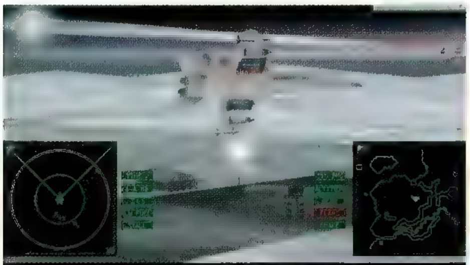
Much like the Origin space opera, the *Top Gun* series attempts to tackle the simpler, arcade-orientated, 'fly-and-fight' approach to combat. So rather than using processing oomph to minutely calculate the effects of molecular air flow over an aircraft's wings, *Hornet's Nest* is 'game' first and 'flight sim' a distant 24th. Thus, with all the gaping depth of a console title, the game bookends its aerial action with plot-advancing, atmosphere-injecting FMV sequences. Actor James Tolkan reprises his original movie role as the bald, shouty commander, setting the grainy scene for the mile-high, jet-powered testosterone that follows. Remember this and only this. You are a 'top gun'. The US military is about to rely on your split-second reflexes and sharply honed flying skills to save the world. Failure is not an option, etcetera.

> "You never feel like you're in any real, arse-clenching danger."

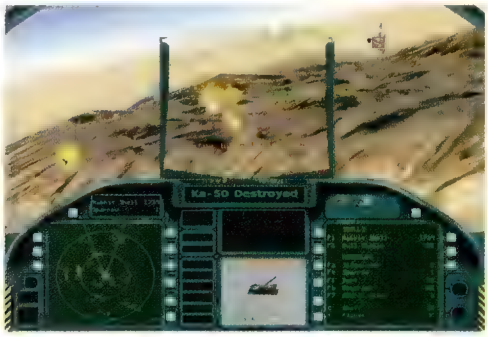
But while *Top Gun: Fire At Will* overcame its clunky graphics and simplistic design with a moody, hugely playable interactive story, *Hornet's Nest* seems to have lost the elements that made the original entertaining. Significantly, because this second game dumps you in the seat of a single-seat F/A-18 Hornet, there's no room for the virtual navigator (the Goose to Tom Cruise's Maverick) who popped up and talked to you as you flew.

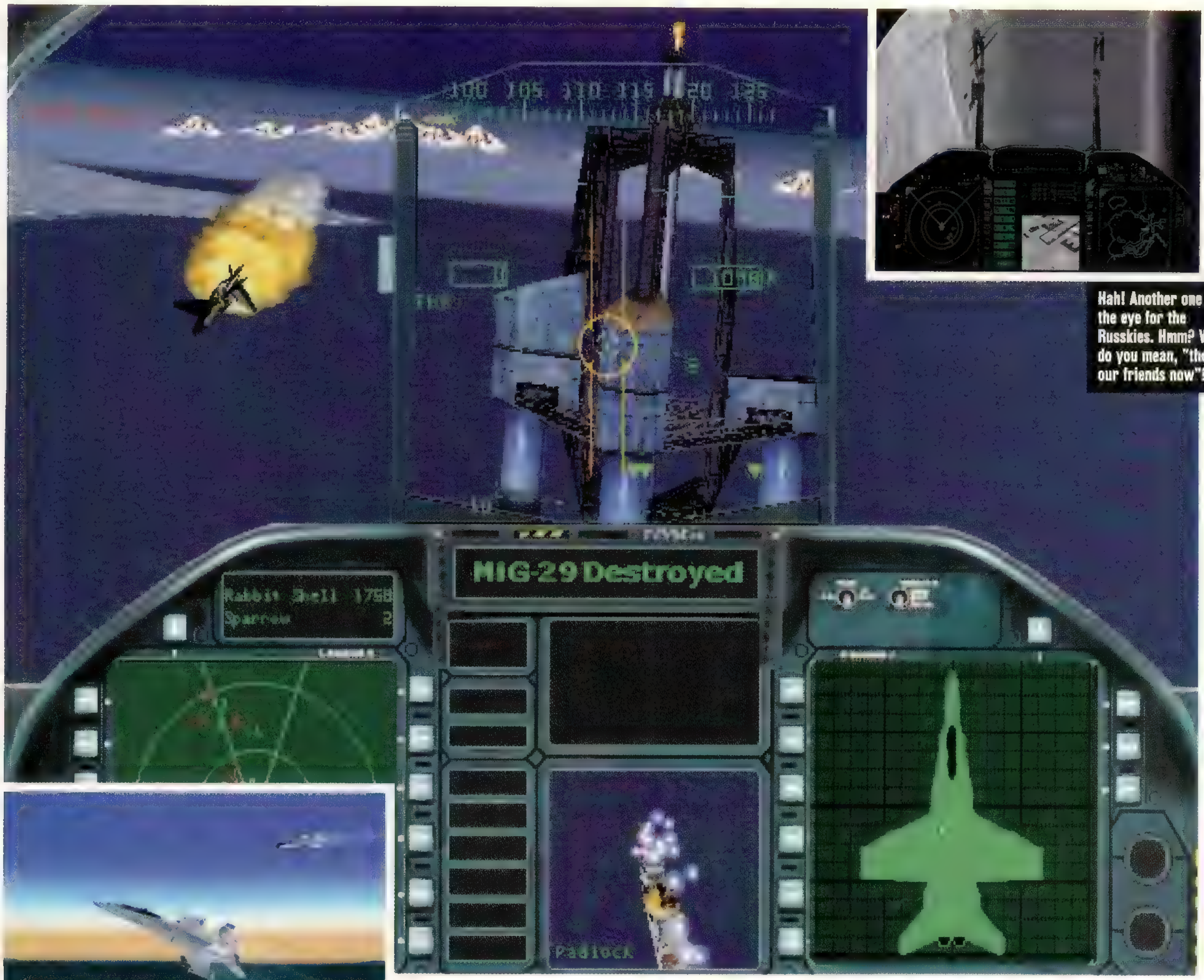
Instead, *Hornet's Nest* is a limited, bare-bones plane game. For starters, players only have a measly fix of in-game options: single-player (which includes an instant action mode) and multi-player (via the Internet, network or direct modem connection). You have a choice of three separate hotspots and therefore three different terrain colours – Siberian snow white, Colombian rainforest green, or Iraqi desert brown – while fuzzy FMV sequences top and tail the individual campaign missions. The mission briefing tickers across the screen as each sortie loads, followed by the mandatory weapons loadout screen where you can equip your F-18 with the latest in high-tech American death technology such as Sidewinder, Wolf and Sparrow missiles, HARM radar-busters, Sunburst Cluster bomblets and so on.

If disappointment is a building tidal wave, it crashes catastrophically into the town of Player



Siberia is a depressing place to be, because, curiously, the snow always appears to fall at the same rate.





Hah! Another one in the eye for the Russkies. Hmm? What do you mean, "they're our friends now"?

Insulting

One and flattens it when the game finally starts. In the game's defence, the aircraft you fly is neatly textured and detailed, soaking up the added power of your accelerated graphics or the in-built engineering of Direct-X 6. As for the landscaping, it's back to the early '90s days of shaded triangles, a giant leap backwards for 3D. The Colombian greenery and the Iraqi dunes are passable, but the frosty Siberian winter is plainly laughable, with snow that falls at the same speed whether you're sitting still on the runway or zooming through the sky at 600 mph.

Reflecting the graphical simplicity, *Top Gun*'s flight model is practically non-existent. Fly with your landing gear down at full speed, dive bravely through the struts of barely drawn bridges. Do whatever you like because you can violently throw your plane around the sky with little regard for the accepted laws of physics. Simply point the nose of your plane at the enemy and shoot. Jink a bit to avoid any returning enemy fire, and deflect enemy missiles with unlimited stores of chaff and flares. Even if you do get hit during *Top Gun*'s combat-by-numbers, your fantasy F-18 can absorb considerable damage before it finally breaks up and explodes in an unconvincing shower of polygonal slabs.

Veering between tiresome air-to-air intercepts and tedious ground attack bombing runs, *Top Gun*'s lack of depth and entertainment value becomes all too apparent. You never feel like you're: (a) flying a real plane, (b) in any real, arse-clenching danger, or (c) part of a believable, functioning game world. Fun as a ten-minute demo, plainly insulting as a full-blown game, *Top Gun*'s 'lone pilot' heroism quickly becomes repetitive. The Instant Action option provides some sort of respite, allowing you to tweak various internal nuts and bolts such as how many planes you fly against, how skilful they are, and what terrain you battle over. The game works better too in multi-player modes, the lack of close-up detail a godsend for modem and Net play.

Uninspired (the second campaign outing is a snowbound canyon run much like the original game's Grand Canyon-based training mission) and dated, there are precisely no reasons why flying fans should buy this game. Go and buy MicroProse's *Falcon 4.0* instead and see how it should be done. **DEAN EVANS**

■ Publisher **MicroProse** ■ Developer **Spectrum Holobyte** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P166, x4 CD-ROM 32Mb RAM** ■ Recommended **P200, x8 CD-ROM, 64Mb RAM, 300Mb+ HD** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, PowerVR, Direct X6** ■ Multi-Player **Modem, network, Internet** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

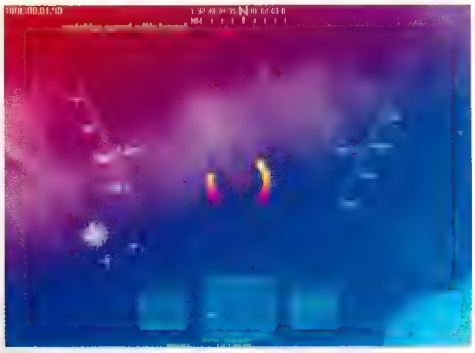
Absolutely nothing to recommend it: avoid this game at all costs.

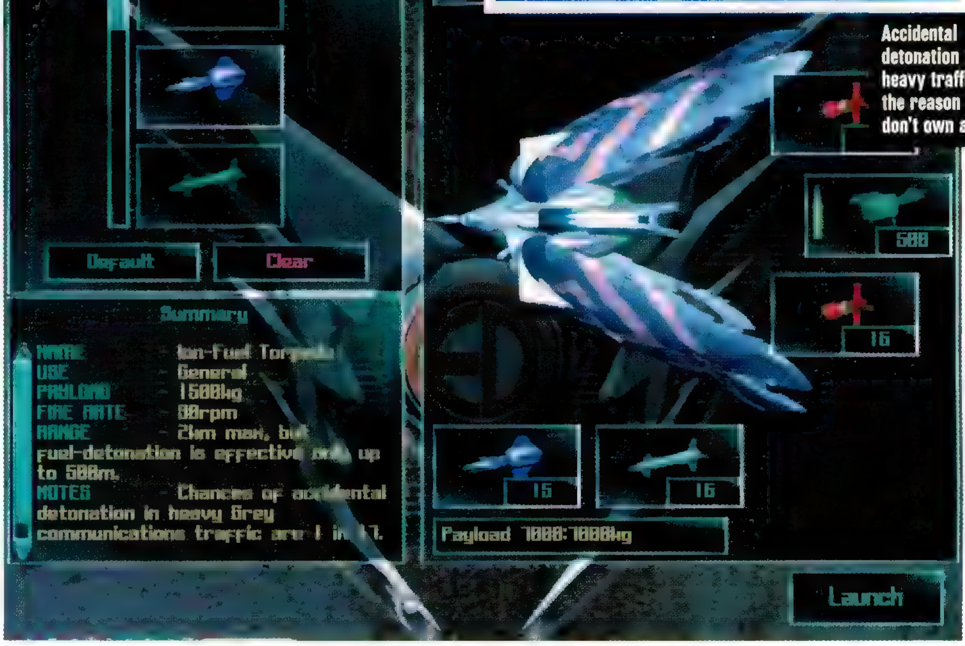
32%

TELLURIAN DEFENCE

Protective

As if you didn't know, Tellurian means 'Denizen of Earth'.





NAME - Ion-Fuel Torpedo
USE - General
PAYLOAD - 1500kg
FIRE RATE - 80rpm
RANGE - 2km max, but fuel-detonation is effective only up to 500m.
NOTES - Chances of accidental detonation in heavy Grey communications traffic are 1 in 17.

Payload 1000:1000kg

Accidental detonation in heavy traffic: the reason I don't own a car.

DEFENDER was always my personal favourite of the old school of computer games. It's based around a series of planets being menaced by thousands upon thousands of whirling alien drones. You plunge into the whirling maelstrom of combat to stop your little people being dragged up screaming into the sky and transformed into more ichor-splattered fiends. It's a marvellous, kinetic exciting game. What *Tellurian Defence* does is take *Defender* and asks, "What if it were real?"

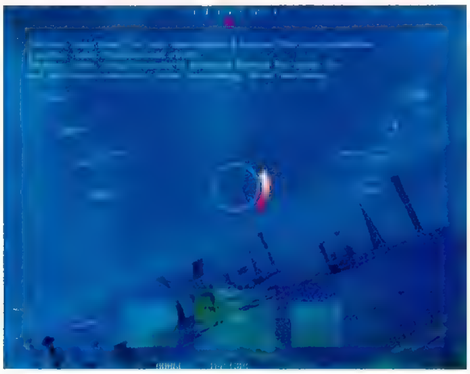
You're the sole pilot in the Earth Defence Force, protecting our beautiful blue globe against the X-Files-esque Grey's UFOs. You're drastically outnumbered in all your conflicts, and your missions are the standard mix of interception, defence and recon sorts. Your vessel is tooled up with a variety of weaponry (homing missiles, chainguns and all your favourites from the Acme Space Destruction catalogue). Between sorties you have to prioritise research into the various artifacts that are recovered from the Grey's crashed ships. Enjoyable simplified dogfighting features prominently. Think of this as *X-Wing* meets *UFO*... (i.e. *X-COM Interceptor* on a planet).

Ah, yes... Mother Earth. In the easy first 13 missions (there are approximately 30) I got shot down once. My other deaths were through accidentally crashing into the ground, and not just because I'm a blithering incompetent (or at least *mostly* not). The Grey's are capable of flying at speeds lower than those required to keep you airborne, so when you automatically match their speeds you start to stall. There's no engine noise so you don't notice yourself falling earthbound. There's no GROUND NEAR! noise to warn you of the rapidly approaching floor. So you crash. A lot.

> **"Another fun-yet-flawed game."**

It's all too amateurish. When you restart a mission after dying, any wingmen who perished are not unperished. You always have to turn the cockpit display off when you restart. And unless you constantly switch your HUD overlays you don't have enough information to fight effectively. Your missiles completely dominate the dogfights. Missions are unfocused and often make little sense. All the attention to detail that separates the *Sins* from the *Half-Lifes* is missing.

What I'm trying to say is that *Tellurian Defence* is both an entertaining game and an old-fashioned one. Inside its slightly shoddy body pulses the soul of a marvellous game, and an altruistic millionaire would do well to fund an all-bells-and-whistles sequel. But, for now, this is another fun-yet-flawed game that no-one will notice next to the forthcoming *X-Wing: Alliance*. **KIERON GILLEN**



■ Publisher **Psygnosis** ■ Developer **In-house** ■ Price **£30** ■ Minimum System **P166, 32Mb** ■ Recommended **P200, 3D card** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, D3D** ■ Multi-Player **LAN, Internet** ■ Time taken to work out meaning of 'Tellurian' **Eight Days** ■ Web Address **http://www.psygnosis.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

Ungerminated seeds of genius lie within – a missed opportunity.

64%

UPRISING 2
LEAD AND DESTROY
BOMBER
AAV
INFANTRY
LIGHT TANK

WITH ALL THIS AT YOUR COMMAND,
CAN YOU HANDLE IT?

STUDIOS

Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT

http//www.ubisoft.co.uk

3DO

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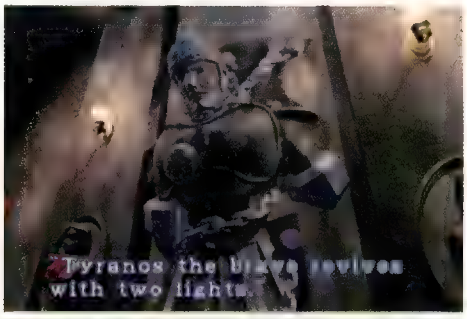
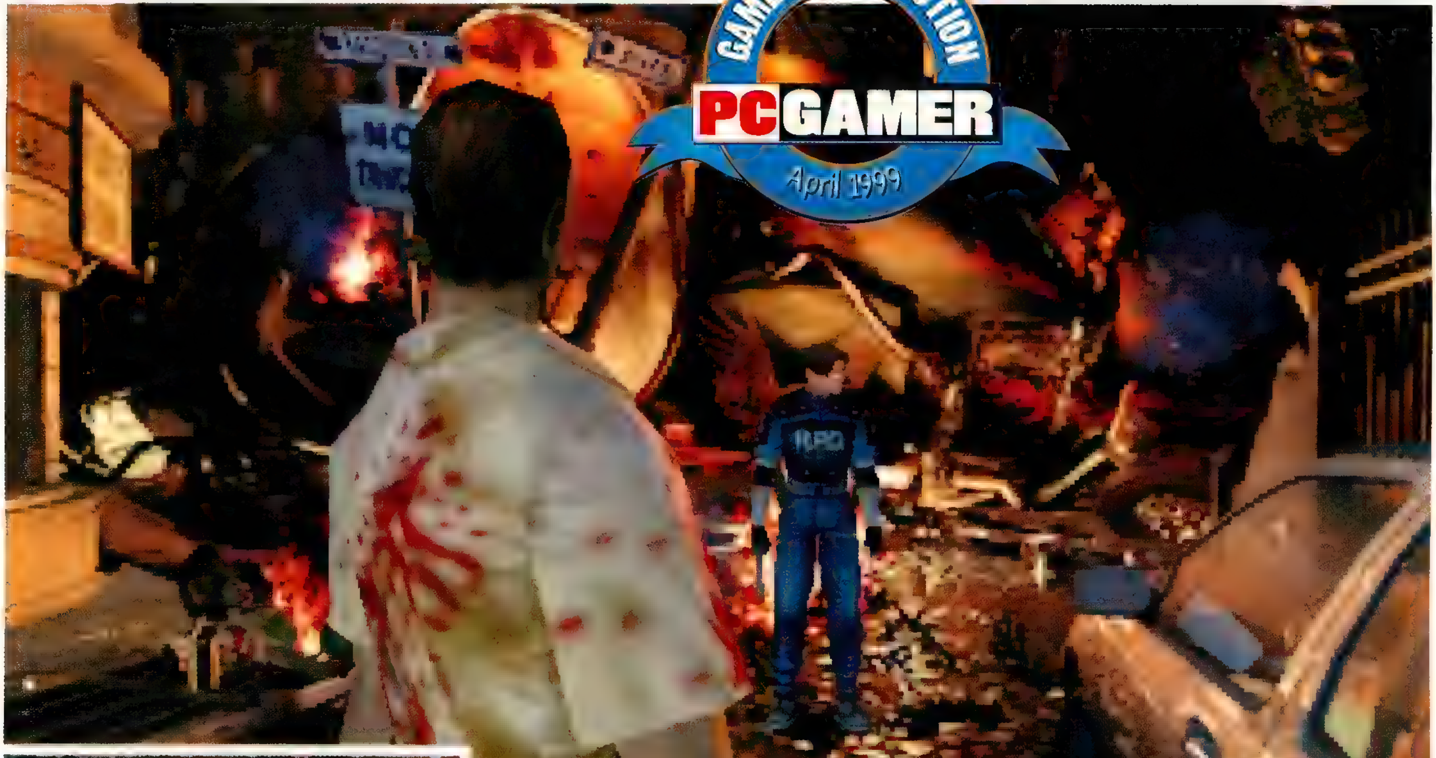
RESIDENT EVIL 2

A year too late, but still dead good.


Tyranos the brave revives with two lights.

(Above) Just one of the game's typically ambiguous puzzles.

GAME OF DISTINCTION PC GAMER April 1999



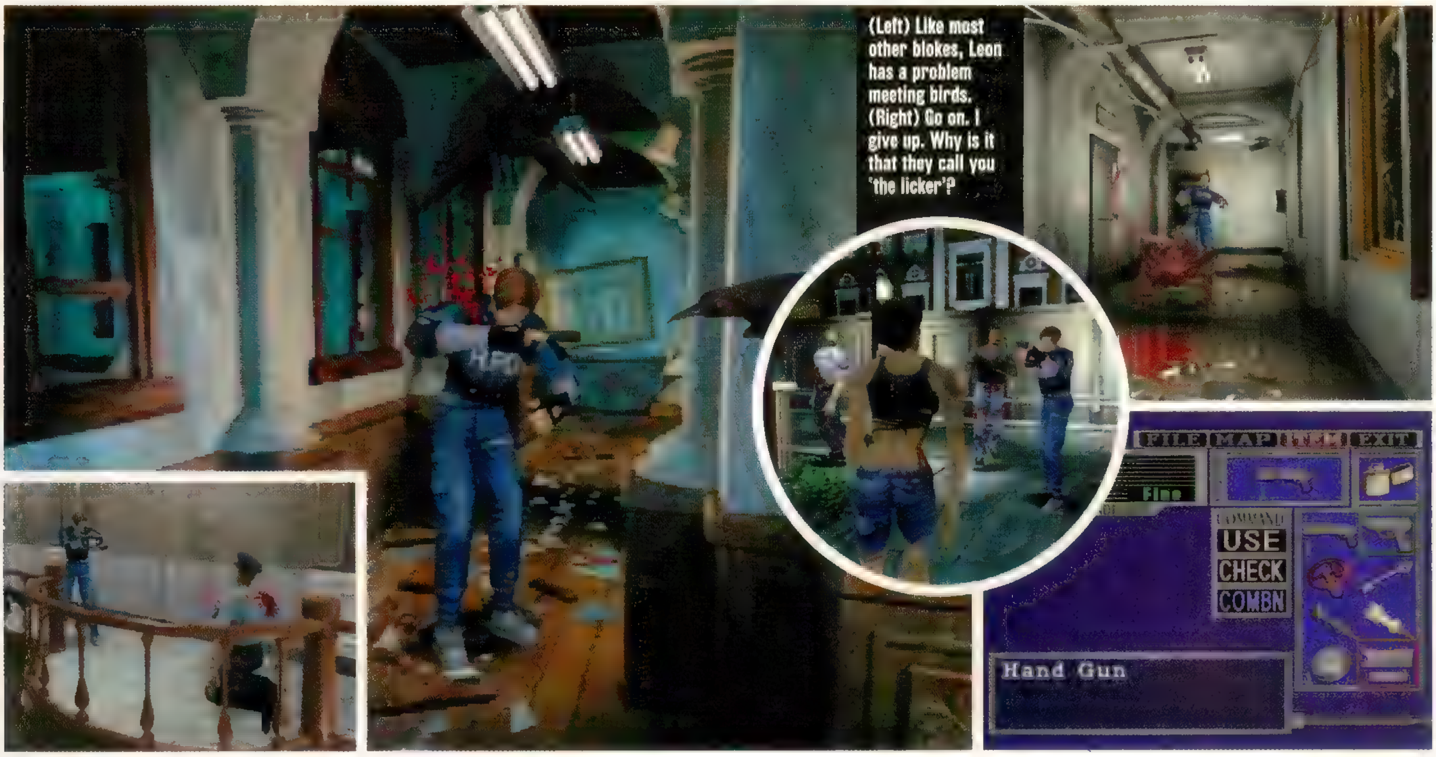
(Above) It's not just the zombies who are after you. (Right) The best bit of the game by far.

ZOMBIES are extremely fickle things. For a start, if they really do want to feast on the flesh of the living, how come they never finish their meal? According to the films, they take a couple of bites (thereby creating a new zombie mate), and then move on to the next one. It's almost as if they don't really like the taste of human meat at all, and would rather sit down to a plate of *insalata delle feste*, served with a lemon grass and papaya compote. Now that, I'd pay to watch.

Instead of this, though, Capcom have, as with the first game, stuck to horror convention – and delivered an action adventure game that's responsible for some of the most genuinely terrifying moments in front of your monitor. Invalid page faults and general protection errors aside, the enormous, hairy tarantulas, legions of moaning zombies and, in particular, the 'licker' are supremely well-realised adversaries – easily on a par with the beasts populating some of today's finest first-person shooter adversaries.

These were always to be expected, though, thanks to the hugely flattering reception the game received nearly a year ago on the PlayStation. At the time it was a landmark title that became the latest fastest-selling game ever on that format. The time that's passed was always going to have had an effect on its ability to amaze, but it's the PC we're talking about here – *the* platform for deeply involving 3D games that are pushing back the boundaries of what's possible from both technological and story-telling points of view.

With these criteria in mind, *Resident Evil 2* suffers. But thankfully only slightly. Most crushing is the revelation that the game isn't a significant improvement on the console version. Sure, the two main characters, Leon and Claire, are almost flawless in terms of both modelling and animation, having been re-worked to take advantage of 3D cards. Pity the same can't be said for the backgrounds. What look to be directly ported versions of the PlayStation environments are used – meaning they appear to be hideously low-res, with a terminal case of pixellation and nothing in the way of lighting effects. It's a problem that blights many games that crossover from consoles, including the original *Resident Evil* and *Final Fantasy VII*, and it's disappointing that Capcom couldn't be bothered to make use of the PC's vast graphical ability.



(Left) Like most other blokes, Leon has a problem meeting birds. (Right) Go on. I give up. Why is it that they call you 'the licker'?

Visceral

In most other areas the game remains largely untouched too. The same (relatively simple) puzzles require you to find and use various keys, often asking you to travel huge distances around the maps in order to reach your next logical destination. It's a trial at times, especially considering the just-long-enough-to-be-annoying loading times, and the cumbersome interface that's incredibly limiting on the amount of objects you can carry, demands that you reload weapons often, and asks you to pick up and use ink ribbons just to save your game (?!).

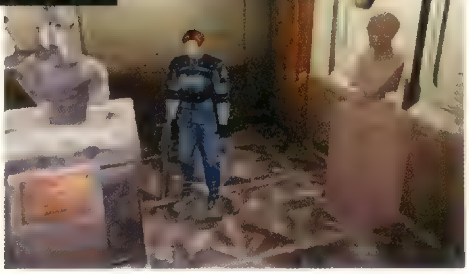
It's not all walking, though. The action may be sporadic and short-lived, but, when they occur, the set-pieces are a pleasure to be involved in. Depending on your approach to combat (and your aim), zombies can have their heads blown off, be ripped in two, or simply stamped upon – and the 'rotate and walk' method of movement (while initially unwieldy) actually adds to the tension once it's been mastered. Running forward may be easy, but try backing-up in a hurry and you'll discover that you actually only travel as fast as your skinless antagonists. You're never given enough ammunition to shoot every creature you meet either, meaning that you often have to resort to ineffectual punches and shrugs as you run through the moaning masses of unholy beasts.

> **"An authentically bad schlock horror experience."**

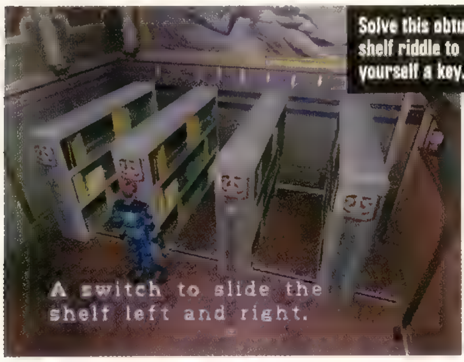
The flick-screen structure remains a slight annoyance, often slowing the game down more than you'd like. Conversely, it's a method that allows for imaginative camera angles – adding a manifest cinematic air to proceedings, with many scenes unmistakably influenced by horror films past and present.

The dialogue remains about as good as you'd hear in a low-budget teen slasher flick too. The voices are OTT, the delivery diabolical, and no attempt's been made to marry the vocals with the characters' faces. Yet surprisingly, for a game of this type, you find yourself not caring. It's all part of the game's hammy charm, and (even if it isn't intentional) Capcom have managed to create an authentically bad schlock horror experience

Ultimately, *Resident Evil 2* is a curiously compulsive experience. There's a huge amount of satisfaction to be gained from finishing it as Leon, Claire or both despite the manifest flaws, and because the game's puzzles alter subtly depending on who you choose to play as, it offers good replay value. It may not sate your eye candy needs, and there isn't a whole lot here that the original didn't hint at first, but as a truly scary, deeply involving, and well-structured action adventure, *Resident Evil 2* warrants your attention. Simple as that. **MATTHEW PIERCE**



The first puzzle requires a bit of physical activity.



A switch to slide the shelf left and right.

Solve this obtuse shelf riddle to win yourself a key.

■ Publisher **Virgin** ■ Developer **Capcom** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P166, 24Mb RAM, Win95/98** ■ Recommended **P200, 32Mb RAM, 550Mb hard drive space, 3D card** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, D3D** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.vie.co.uk** ■ Release Date **Out now**

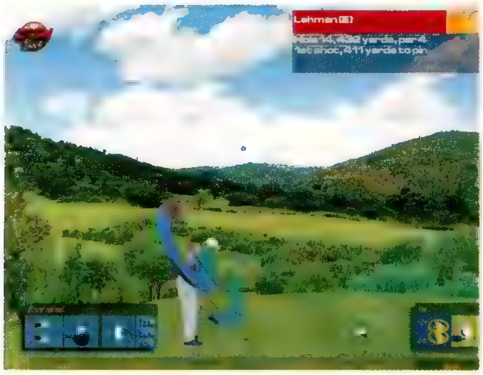
PC GAMER

Not a vast improvement on the original, but still far bigger and scarier.

85%

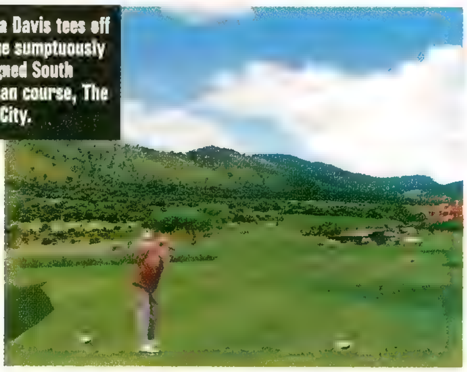
PRO GOLF 18

Golf on the PC? Surely it's a choice between *Links LS* and *PGA Tour Golf?* But as Tony Blair loves to point out, there is a 'third way'…

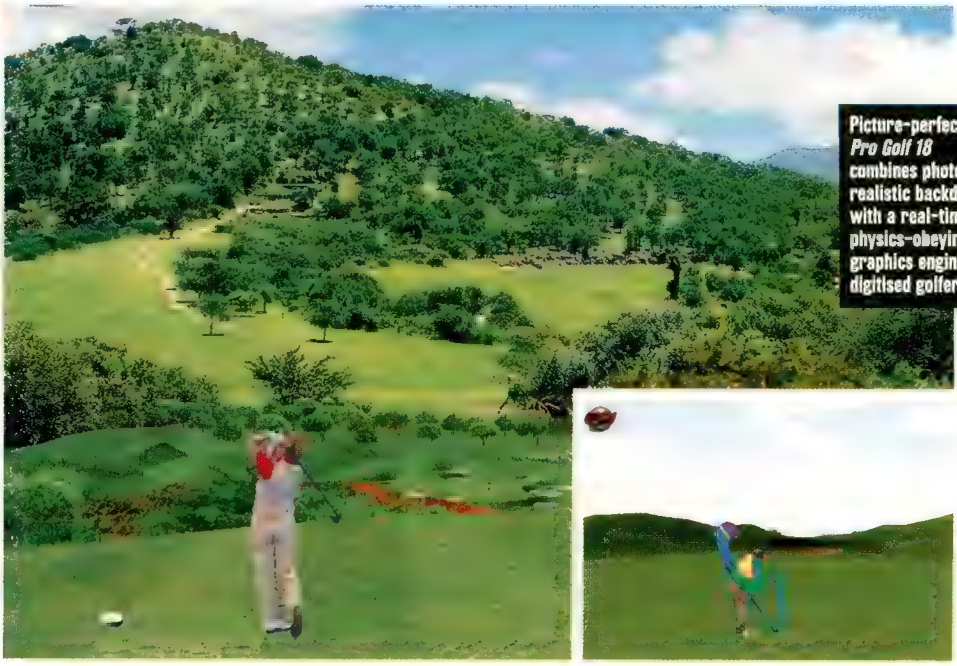


THE Beeb's Peter Allis certainly knows a struggling PC golfer when he sees one. "As long as you live, the hole will never move towards the ball," were his sympathetic words as my mouse-controlled Colin Montgomerie missed an easy putt at Royal County Down. Compare that to his aggressive CBS counterpart, Bobby Clampett, who summed up my inelegant, often wayward strokeplay with the curt and dismissive: "That stinks." Allis is a pat-you-on-the-back, never-mind-my-old-son commentator. Where he would say: "Ooh, that's a bit of a mishit there" to describe a blastingly overhit slice into a nearby lake; Clampett is venomous in his condemnation: "We've seen some good shots from this tee," he'd jeer. "But that wasn't one of them."

Both TV pundits have had their sporting wisdom digitised and distilled into the two CDs that make up Psygnosis' *Pro Golf 18*, an ambitious attempt to break the stranglehold that Access and EA have on the golf scene. It's a good effort too: a comprehensive, neatly playable game with a visual style that imitates the sort of logo-splashed, graphics-heavy coverage you see on TV. Like every other golf sim, there are the familiar gaming modes – Tournament, Strokeplay, Shootout, Skins and Fourball – while each type can be played on one of the three featured courses: Ireland's Royal County Down (a tricky gorse-covered links in the shadow of the Mountains of Mourne); The Lost City (Sun City's Gary Player-designed course in South Africa); and the Coeur d'Alene (the landscaped US challenge which features the world's only movable island green).



Laura Davis tees off on the sumptuously designed South African course, The Lost City.



Picture-perfect? *Pro Golf 18* combines photo-realistic backdrops with a real-time, physics-obeying graphics engine and digitised golfers.

Synthetic

Pro Golf 18 also boasts the motion-captured mini-clones of eight professionals – Colin Montgomerie, Ian Woosnam, Jesper Parnevik, Mark O'Meara, Vijay Singh and Tom Lehman, plus two female ball-thwackers in the shapes of Dottie Pepper and Laura Davis. You can choose to play as any one of these casually dressed hitters (their individual styles have been studied and modelled), or to create your own, with the option to select your clubs from a choice of woods, irons and wedges and whether your selection have steel or graphite shafts. Yet, all this detail counts for nothing if you can't get your swing-timing right. And while *Pro Golf 18* features the traditional three-click method, it also includes a new four-click system for greater realism and control – easy enough to get to grips with, slightly trickier to master. Like real golf, learn the courses, hone your button-tapping (there is a new putting system too) and your skills will improve.

"All hail the exhaustive options."

But although you can't throw rotten fruit at the game's mechanics, you *can* lob the odd mould-blighted tomato at *Pro Golf's* graphics. There are some nice touches – like the picture-in-picture video clips of the golfers during a particularly good (or bad) shot, plus the TV-style presentation. But each course has a perfect, almost freeze-frame artifice about it, brought to an animation-free half-life by sporadic crowd bellowing and ambient bird twittering. All hail the exhaustive options (adjust your golfing stance, check the wind and weather, analyse the bumps and dips on the green), but the visuals aren't as impressive (the golf ball is too small on screen, so much so that it's often difficult to see where it lands). Think of *Links LS* as a Tiger Woods, EA's *Tiger Woods* as an Ernie Els. *Pro Golf 18* is a Nick Faldo in comparison. You know it's good, but there are a few tiny problems to iron out before it challenges the big boys.

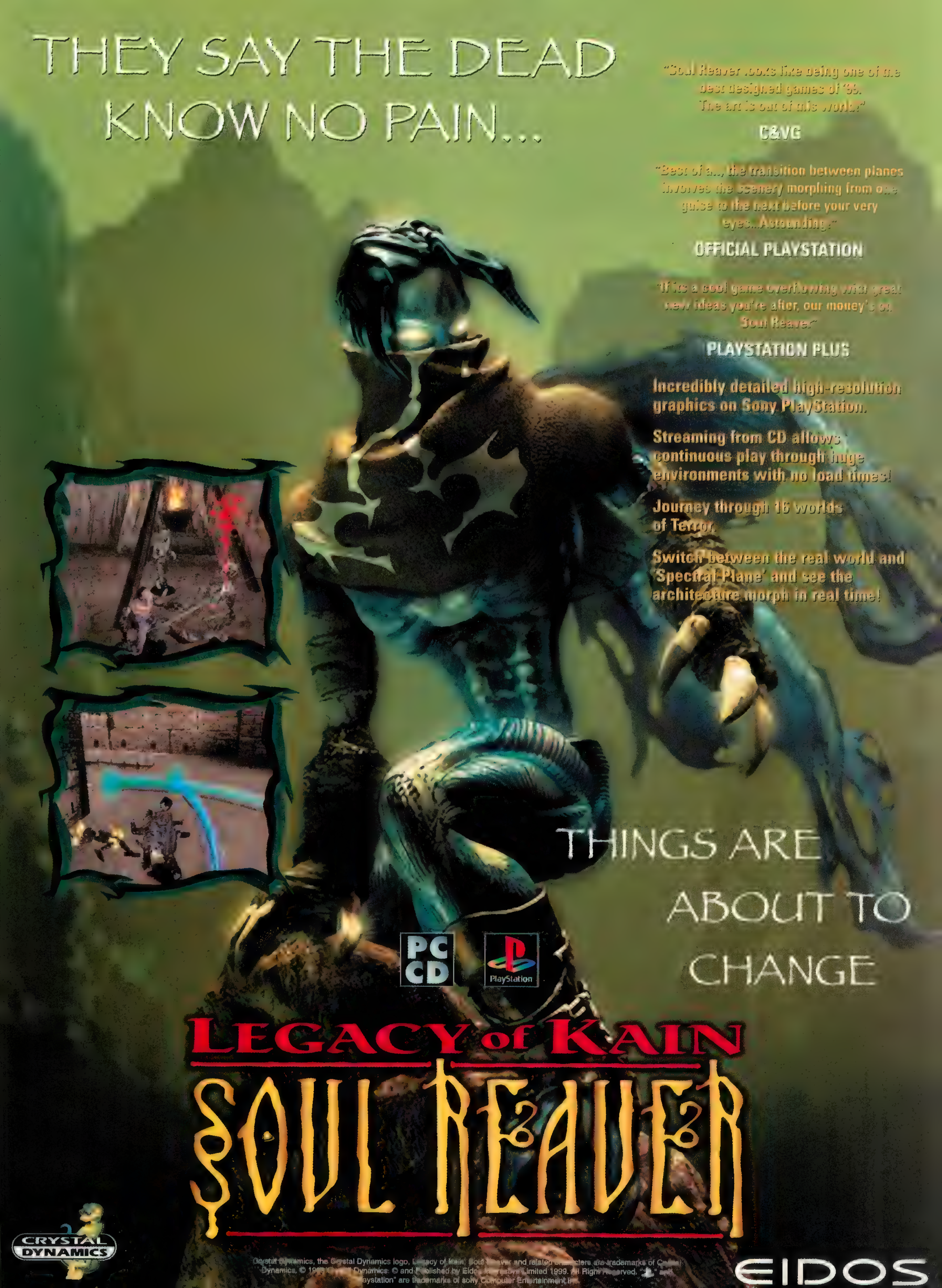
DEAN EVANS

■ Publisher **Psygnosis** ■ Developer **Intelligent Games** ■ Price **£35**
■ Minimum System **P133, 32Mb, x4 CD-ROM** ■ Recommended **P233, 64Mb**
■ Graphics Accelerator **None** ■ Multi-Player **Network, modem** ■ Web Address **http://www.psygnosis.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

Slow, mouse-clicking thwackery. But not quite as good as it thinks it is.

81%


THEY SAY THE DEAD KNOW NO PAIN...
THINGS ARE ABOUT TO CHANGE
PC CD
PlayStation
LEGACY of KAIN
SOUL REAVER
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
EIDOS

"Soul Reaver looks like being one of the best designed games of '99. The art is out of this world!"

C&VG

"Best of all, the transition between planes involves the scenery morphing from one guise to the next before your very eyes...Astounding."

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION

"If it's a cool game overflowing with great new ideas you're after, our money's on Soul Reaver."

PLAYSTATION PLUS

Incredibly detailed high-resolution graphics on Sony PlayStation.

Streaming from CD allows continuous play through huge environments with no load times!

Journey through 16 worlds of Terror.

Switch between the real world and 'Spectral Plane' and see the architecture morph in real time!

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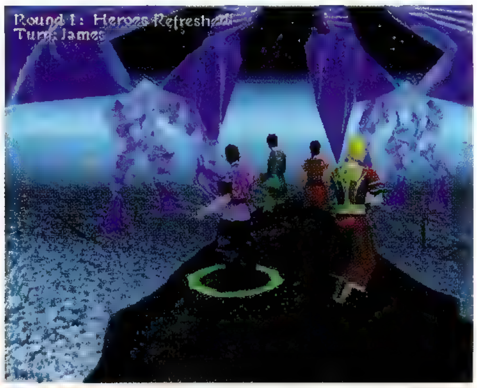
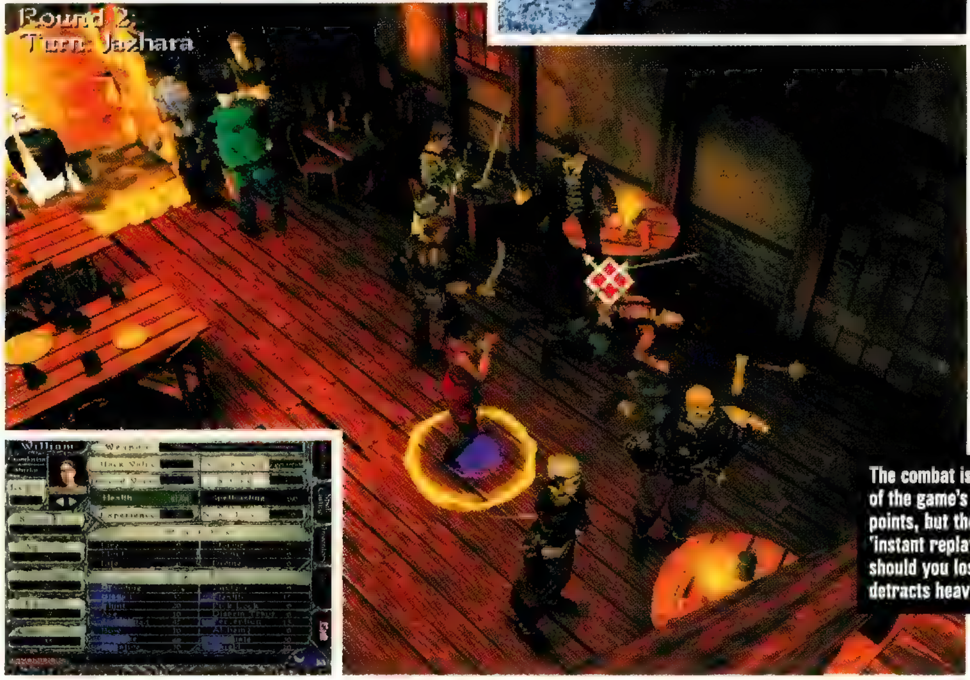
RETURN TO KRONDOR

What do you mean, you never wanted to go there in the first place.





The combat is one of the game's high points, but the 'instant replay', should you lose, detracts heavily.

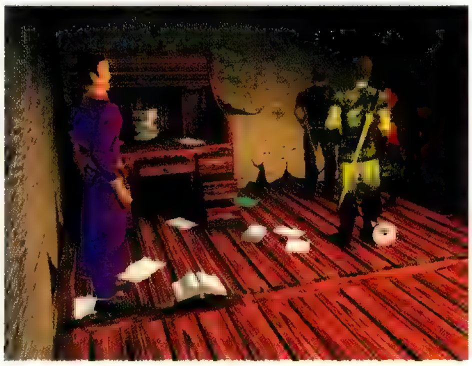
Feisty

TIME for a bit of hack and slash, methinks, as the long overdue official sequel to *Betrayal At Krondor* finally arrives. Once again we find ourselves in the fantasy world of Midkemia, creation of Mr Raymond E. Feist, who has authored many a swords and sorcery yarn. His story-telling influence breathes life into this RPG/adventure hybrid, which ably captures the atmosphere of the novels with a competent 3D engine and clever use of music.

The script is reasonably well done, though balances precariously on some awful acting and truly tragic accents. Take a visit to the cells for possibly the worst Irish, or should that be 'Oirish' accent you are ever likely to hear. To top it all, this particular character is drunk, so with stereotypes aplenty, let us set off on our quest, as a group of up to five adventurers, in a three-way struggle to recover the Tear of the Gods, a sacred relic.

The plot unfolds slowly and enticingly, drawing you deeper and deeper into the game, but it flatters to deceive, as you soon discover it's little more than a multimedia novel. Despite the wealth of choices apparently on offer, the game follows an all too linear and obvious path. Sub-plots are rare and the game as a whole fails to provide much of a challenge.

> **"Follows an all too linear and obvious path."**



At least the characters are well conceived, appearing and disappearing from the party in accordance with the plot. You start off as Squire James aka 'Jimmy the Hand', a thief turned good, with your first task being to find and escort a Keshian sorceress, who has come to aid the prince. There are plenty of stats and attributes to play with as you advance in level, based on those 'good ole' experience points and there are some nice touches, such as a well-thought-out alchemy system, available for the more mystic types.

The combat system works efficiently, utilising turn-based orders, and allows your characters to put together some inventive moves versus a range of opponents, from village grunts to magical monsters. However, should you lose a combat, you're instantly given the opportunity to replay it without penalty, a feature Frank Bruno has craved all his life. While this may seem attractive and enables you to avoid repeating whole chunks of the story, the lack of risk kills any excitement that the combats otherwise create.

This problem is compounded by the game being all too short; experienced gamers will finish it without ever feeling as though they got going. A variety of difficulty levels and the ability to change the balance between traditional brawling and magic don't offer much replay value, as once the story is known, there is little point in suffering it all again.

JASON WESTON

■ Publisher **Sierra Studios** ■ Developer **PyroTechnix** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **Pentium 166, 24Mb, Windows 95/98, x4 CD-ROM** ■ Recommended **Pentium II, 64Mb RAM** ■ Graphics Accelerator **D3D** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.sierrastudios.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

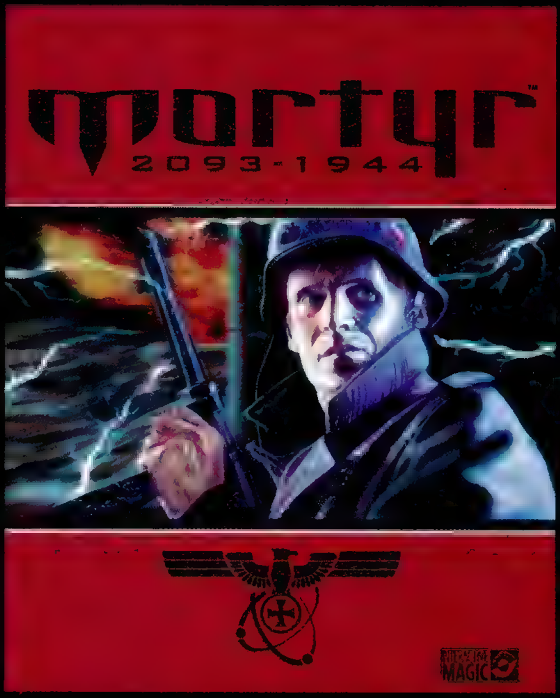
PC GAMER

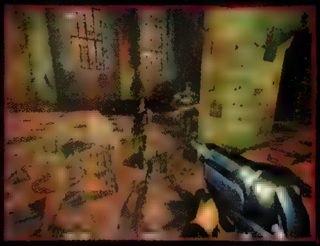
Captivating and atmospheric story-telling disguise a shallow game.

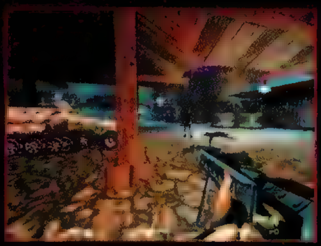
68%

The Gestapo.
Fond of peaked caps,
tight leather pants and
glistening biceps.

They'll probably enjoy a good hiding.







GIVE THEM A RIGHT GOOD JACKBOOTING

Interactive Magic MIRAGE

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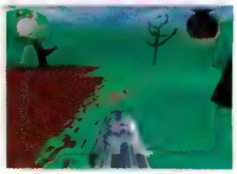
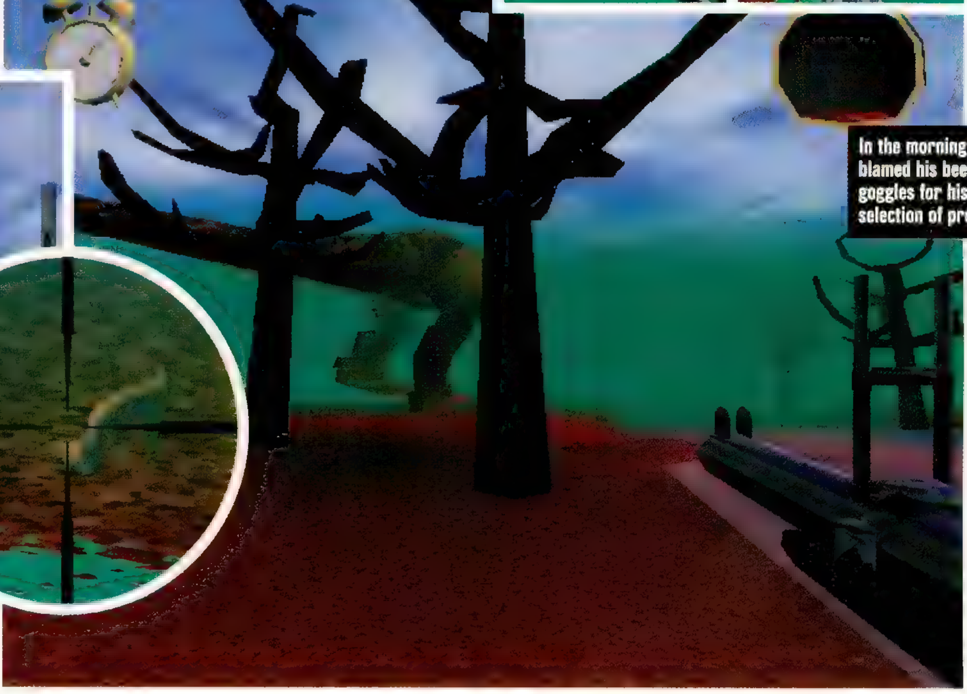
NATURAL FAWN KILLERS

At least it's not too deer. Arf.

(Below) Yes, it is what it looks like.





In the morning, he blamed his beer goggles for his selection of prey.

QUITE simply the best hunting game... ever. Which is a bit like saying "The best Kula Shaker song... ever", but true nevertheless. It's also rather good at information compression. To explore all of *3D Hunting Grizzly's* aspects in PCG 66, Mr Longhurst had to review the cover. With *Natural Fawn Killers* all we need's the name.

The word 'fawn' hints that it's a hunting game. 'Killers' reiterates that violence against 'fawns' will be part of your activities. 'Natural' is present to make the pun-based title work. Anyway, that tells us that the game's a joke. So there you have it: a comedy hunting sim. We can all go home.

But since it's only 3:30, I can't. You're placed in a luscious cartoon 3D world stocked full of prey, like rabbits (pathetically easy), deer (trickier), bear (unco-operative rugs) and a Tyrannosaurus Rex (will gobble you up like a trailer-park chicken mcnugget). Every corpse you collect gives you some blood. Collect enough gore and you've completed the level. Yum.

I appear to have been 'whomped'. How unfortunate.

Unnatural

> **"Teems with laugh-out-loud touches."**

But it has moments that gathered the GAMER flock to marvel. Zooming in on an innocent fawn's head to messily recreate your favourite scene from Bambi. Chasing rabbits with a chaingun. Watching a grizzly climb from the crater formed by your grenade launcher. The surprise as you catch two rabbits getting fruity, swiftly creating a third. The absolute fear as Rex strides out of the mists, more Jurassic than anything in *Trespasser*. *NFK* teems with laugh-out-loud touches.

And then it's as if someone's stood up in the programmers office and said, "Hey... wait a minute guys. We're just doing a parody of hunting sims. It's a bit of a giggle. We don't have to actually make a game, because we're playing it for laughs, aren't we?" Which makes you want to pop over to their house, take a rusty nailgun and staple their eyelids to the floor while furiously shouting, "Just because it's a joke game doesn't mean you can peddle this two-dimensional, lazy bowel-produce that's over faster than the Willy Hague's 'Great Speeches' EP."

Guys. Please make a game next time.

KIERON GILLEN

■ Publisher **One Stop Direct** ■ Developer **The Gameplay Company** ■ Price **£20** ■ Minimum System **P166, 16Mb RAM** ■ Recommended **P200, 32Mb RAM, 3D card** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, Direct 3D** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.gameplayco.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER	
Funny for a couple of hours. But it's more than a man can bear. Arf.	**45%**

MACHINES™

*[WIRED/.FOR>**WAR**:]*

This is the shape of war to come.

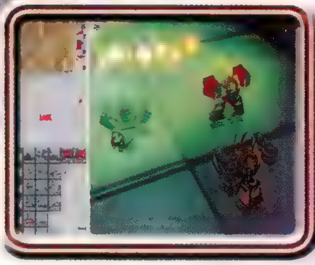
Where artificial intelligence is all that remains. Where you can create your own unique army of exquisite death machines. Where you can design, customise and manufacture every facet of your automated troops. Where you have the choice to command from above or fight head-to-head in first person view.

Where you can actually enter enemy bases and steal technology or plant mines. Where you can research and build over 25 weapons from nuclear missiles to outer space ion cannons. Where you can travel from one side of the universe to the other in search of enemy worlds.

This is the deepest real-time strategy experience ever conceived. This is hardware acceleration with a vengeance.

Compete: Deep multi-player action. Four player competition over the Internet or LAN.

Command: Three different viewpoints, 3rd person overview, ground level, or 1st person.



Spy: Full sabotage and espionage capabilities. Invade enemy camps...wreak havoc from within.

Create: Research and build a multitude of buildings, research facilities, and Mechanoids

PC CD

Acclaim

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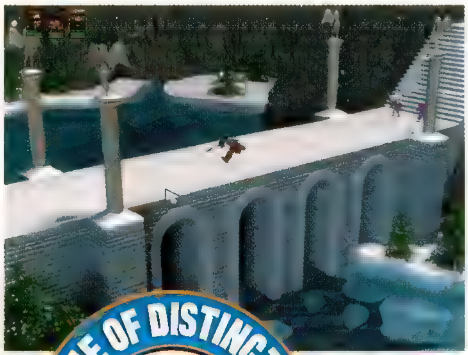
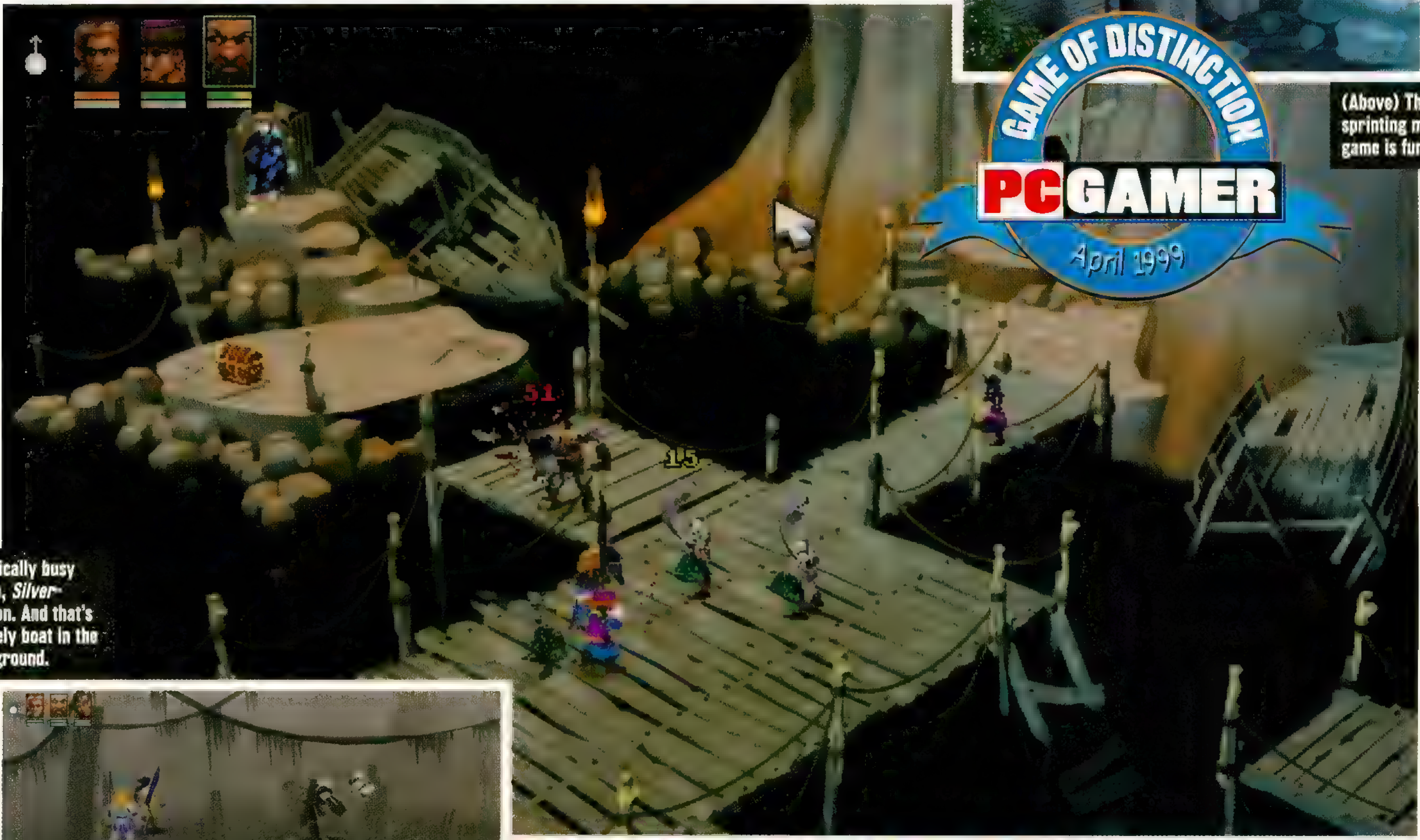
SILVER

After three long years, Infogrames turn the RPG on its head. And the beard count is low...

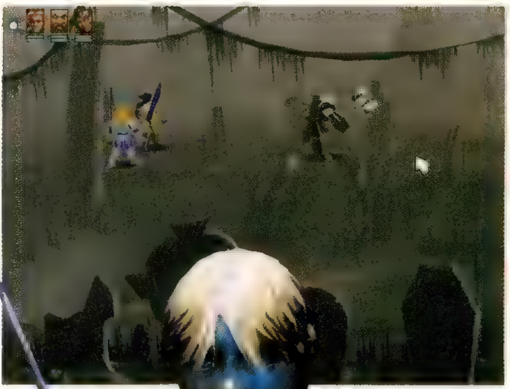


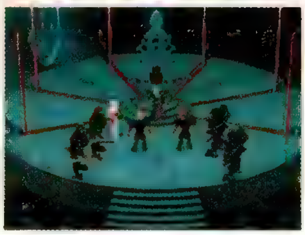
(Above) The sprinting mini game is fun. Ha.

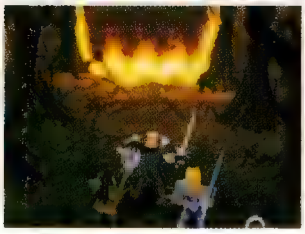
GAME OF DISTINCTION PC GAMER April 1999

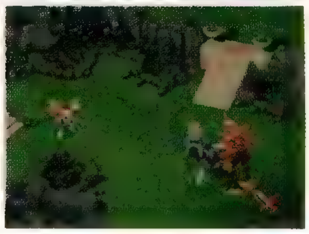


A typically busy battle, *Silver*-fashion. And that's a lovely boat in the background.







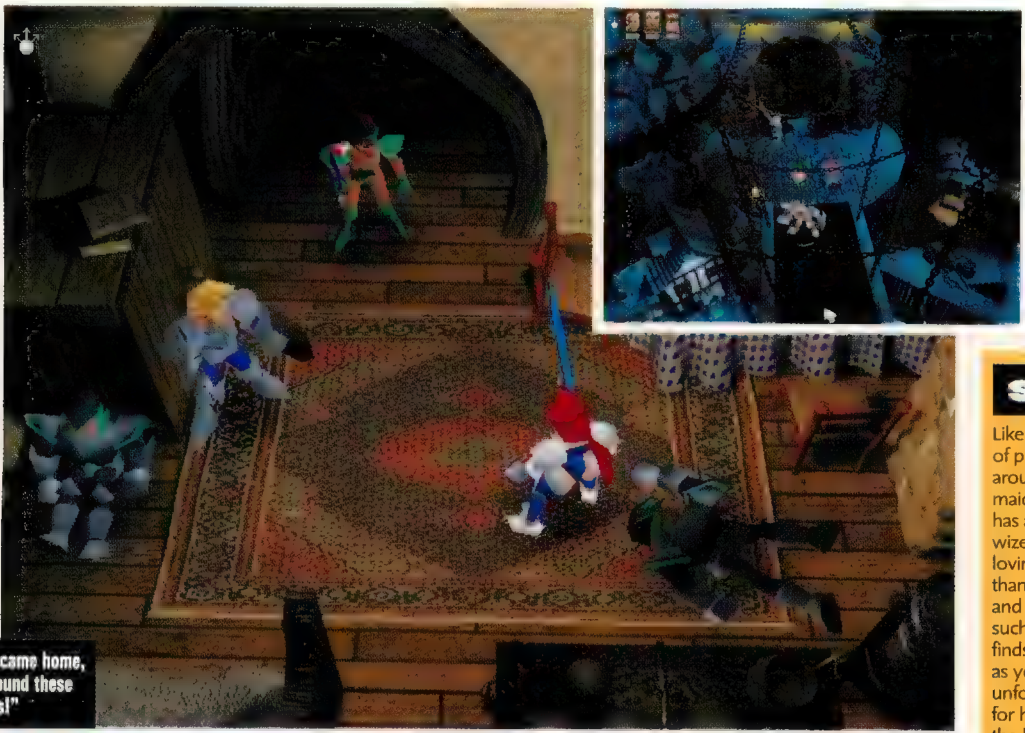


PLEASE excuse me for bringing this up in these Pentium-polished pages, but for the past few months I've been playing Nintendo's *Legend Of Zelda: The Ocarina Of Time*. And it's flag-wavingly, foot-stampingly, day-devouringly good. And, if you'd like to peek over the fence, I'll tell you that it's a fully 3D, go-where-you-want, do-what-you-like action-adventure-enhanced RPG. "Aaaaand what, precisely, has this got to do with *Silver*?" I hear you ask. Well, for the purposes of elucidation and comparison; *Zelda* is as close to a true real-time RPG yet; battles take place in real time, the sun sets and rises in tiny virtual days, and you can wander around exploring and interacting to your heart's content.

Final Fantasy VII, though, by way of contrast, is stuffed full of rigid pre-rendered backgrounds that prohibit scenery-interaction, and it likes to do things the turn-based way, with a fairly linear sense of progression and an emphasis on character/party building. The reason I mention these seemingly disparate games is that, while they both fall into technically the same genre, they're both pant-rippingly great, yet they both take radically different approaches.

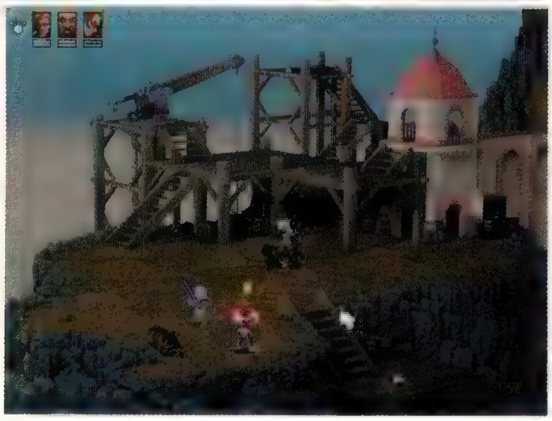
Which brings us, fairly neatly, to *Silver*. Three long years in the making, it has often, and tiresomely, been trumpeted as the Western answer to the Japanese *Final Fantasy* mega-series. And, although there's a lot of truth in that – but for a few fundamental differences, Infogrames appear to have been cribbing from Squaresoft's homework quite comprehensively – in concept, *Silver* pitches itself fairly neatly between the two previously mentioned games, attempting to establish a valid middle-ground and thus its own identity. Which, thankfully, is something it does with a pleasing amount of success.

But it wasn't ever thus. Originally conceived as a more turn-based affair, *Silver* was going to be *Command & Conquer* with experience points. Combat was simply a case of pointing your



"So I came home, and found these bodies!"

The GAMER offices were always draughty.

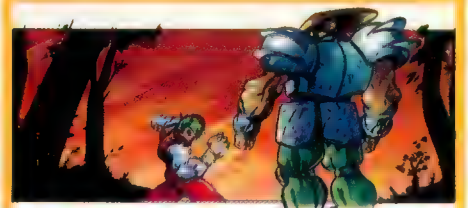


(Below) It's lovely, isn't it? Almost as nice as Jim's smile, which is terribly sweet when he remembers not to bare his teeth. The darling.

SCENE SETTING

Like any RPG worth its salt, *Silver* throws a baited line of plot at you, providing a handy reason to romp around hacking, slashing and generally rescuing fair maidens. Silver, the titular despotic wizard emperor, has a spot of trouble with his wife. You see, being a wizened old necromancer, he's not been the most, er, loving of husbands (let's face it, you'd think she'd be thankful). So, bereft of love, foolish old Mrs Silver goes and finds comfort in the arms of another. Obviously, such impropriety cannot go unnoticed, so Silver duly finds out, slaughters the hapless suitor and proceeds, as you would, to strangle his wife. Leaving him, unfortunately, a widower. This is nominally the front for him kidnapping the 100 most beautiful women of the land – one of whom is the betrothed of David, our hero – so he can choose a new bride, although there's a bit more going on than would appear. Silver has also made a deal with a dark and no doubt eldritch god, Apocalypse, in return for a portion of the god's power. And Silver's end of the bargain? He must sacrifice 100 fulsome wenches, of course.

And that, children, is the splendidly wrought Macguffin behind *Silver*. Great.



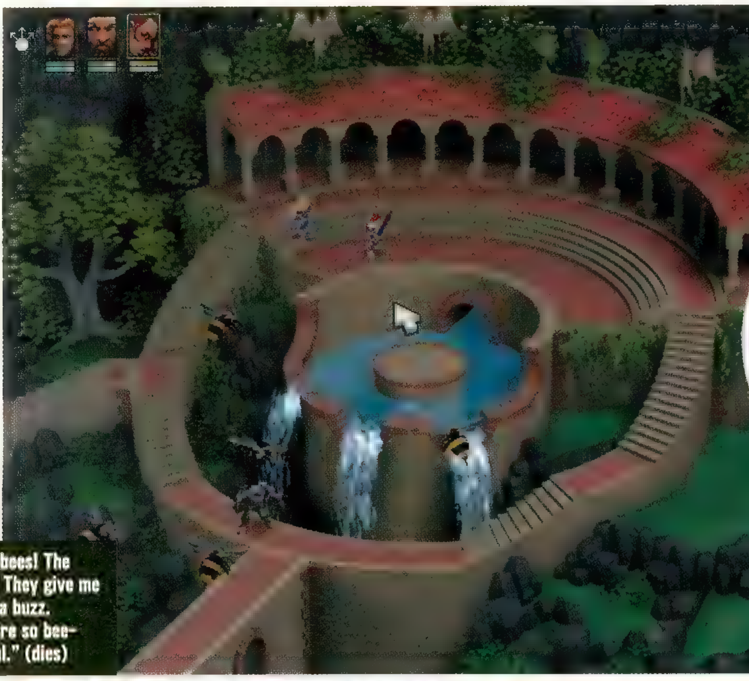
Shining

characters towards the enemy and watching them slog it out, results being based on experience, strength, weaponry, and so on. In short, it sounded rather dull. Thankfully, a major rethink jettisoned this idea, and what Infogrames came up with was a beautifully simple, wonderfully intuitive real-time combat system. Everything is done with movements of the mouse; hold down Ctrl, the left mouse button and swing to the left, and whatever character you're controlling will provide a sweeping chop with whatever weapon they're equipped with. To the left, naturally. Similarly, moving the mouse to the right will produce a right sweep, moving the mouse forward will evince a skewering stab, and, best of all, a backward movement will result in a mighty roundhouse slice, positioning your protagonist to face any rearward enemies. New moves are learnt throughout the game, allowing you to build up a fairly comprehensive lexicon of offensive options. A variety of defensive armaments are also available – such as a number of shields – and a touch of the right mouse button is all that's needed to ward off enemy attacks.

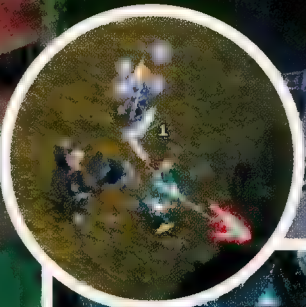
"An admirably user-friendly interface."

The whole system is a brave move, but one that could be accused of 'dumbing down' the game to cater for everyone. And it is a simple system, but, ultimately, it's one that's splendidly so. *Silver* delivers an admirably user-friendly interface – one that it's possible to become increasingly adept with, and one that becomes a sugary-sweet boon as companions join your party, battles become larger and fiercer, and more powerful adversaries require single-minded evisceration. Likewise, the rest of the game mechanics revolve around this practical but effective accessibility. There's no need for anything else, when playing *Silver*, but the mouse. Right-clicking on a character will bring up a personal menu designed in a 'wheel' arrangement. Simply click on one of the options presented around the 'wheel' and you'll be taken to a sub-menu where you can choose your weapons, spells, shields, which healing piece of food to ⇨

"Right. We go in, drink the booze, and run. Okay?"

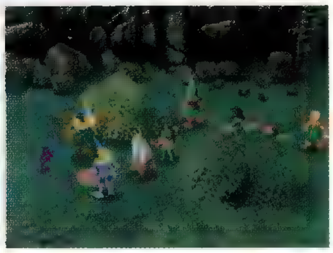


"The bees! The bees! They give me such a buzz. They're so bee-ootiful." (dies)



That huge scary hand is the on-screen icon. And not, for example, a huge scary hand. Do you see?

Splendid effects, no? All bright and pretty. Like me.



SATURDAY NIGHT'S ALL RIGHT...

The mouse-driven combat system, as described below, is a pretty darn fine one, allowing you to have direct control over broadsword-swinging David, or, if you should choose, one of the five companions that you can pick up along the course of your adventures. But – aha! – if the system is so defiantly and proudly real-time, how does your party of brave heroes join in the action? Surely a turn-based system would be far better suited to multiple-role combat, eh? Hmm? Well, in some ways, yes, but – again – Infogrames have pre-empted such thinking. It's true that you can only control, directly, one character in combat, and the vast digital mind of your PC helps out with any allies, helping them deliver righteous attacks o' justice.

You can have some say over how CPU-controlled characters fight, though, by virtue of a little planning, especially in the projectile weapon and magic departments. It's possible, you see, to set characters to automatically fire a set number of shots at the enemy. It's therefore possible to command your characters to let loose a resource-draining pre-emptive strike, or keep up a steady rate of enemy-whittling arrows, and so on. The number of projectiles you want to fire are bound to the F5-F8 keys, and – guess what? – it all works terribly well.

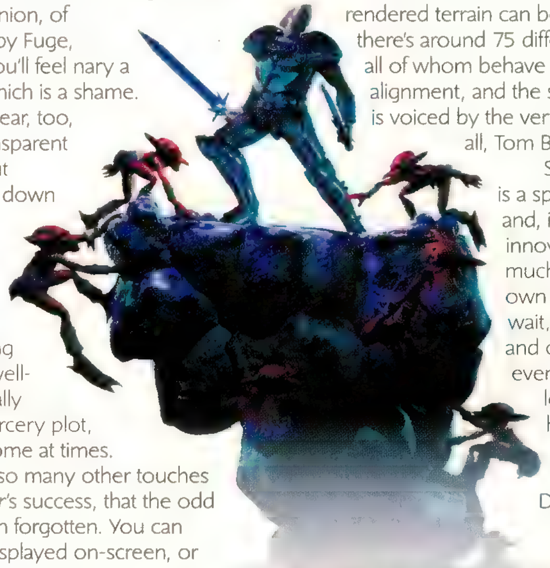
⇨ use, and so on. Also presented are at-a-glance hit point meters, magic bars, and so on.

Silver, then, once you get used to it, becomes a fluid and intuitive affair, and one that's refreshingly different and enjoyable in the notoriously old-school, stats-based RPG genre. But it's not without its problems.

The pre-rendered backgrounds – of which there are around 270 – are uniformly lovely, atmospheric and wonderfully detailed (and of far higher quality than *FFVII*'s designed-for-TV environments). The problem with combining these with the real-time mechanics is the fixed camera angles for each screen; sometimes combat may take place fairly close to the camera, which is fine, and obviously desirable, but at others, the action is taking place so far away that trying to manipulate your character in-fight becomes confusing and random, as you can't make out what the minuscule figures are doing.

"Refreshingly different and enjoyable."

Also, eschewing cut-scenes altogether, the story is driven forward through the in-game graphics; at many points, the computer will take over proceedings to further the plot. Fair enough, as it provides for a seamless and self-contained experience, but it's hard to make an emotional attachment to the teeny cartoon/manga-ish characters. For instance, when David's grandfather (your very first companion, of sorts) gets butchered by Fuge, Silver's ruthless son, you'll feel nary a twinge of remorse. Which is a shame. The game is terribly linear, too, offering you a few transparent choices of direction but eventually forcing you down a certain path. Like *FFVII* (again), *Silver* wants you to enjoy the unfolding story rather than making choices and discovering one for yourself; the well-worn and conventionally western swords-'n'-sorcery plot, however, can be tiresome at times.



But there are still so many other touches that contribute to *Silver*'s success, that the odd disappointment is soon forgotten. You can choose to have text displayed on-screen, or listen to the copious speech within the game – and it is copious. Every character (and there are hundreds) you meet will have several dialogues, and, gratifyingly, the voice acting is of a pleasingly high standard. Characters scale as they move into or out of the screen, certain parts of the pre-rendered terrain can be used for cover, there's around 75 different types of enemy, all of whom behave according to their alignment, and the smashing intro movie is voiced by the very best Doctor of them all, Tom Baker.

So what we're left with is a sprawling, enjoyable and, in its own way, innovative RPG, borrowing much but fashioning its own fair furrow. Worth the wait, then? We can safely and confidently say yes, even if our hero David looks just like the horse-faced James Van Der Beeks, titular star of racy teen drama Dawson's Creek.

JES BICKHAM

■ Publisher **Infogrames** ■ Developer **In-house** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P166, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95, Direct X6** ■ Recommended **P266, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95, Direct X6** ■ Graphics Accelerator **None** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.silver-game.com** ■ Release Date **March**

PC GAMER

A fresh RPG, and a brave attempt to bring real-time to the party.

90%

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GRAPHICS BY ATI rage 128

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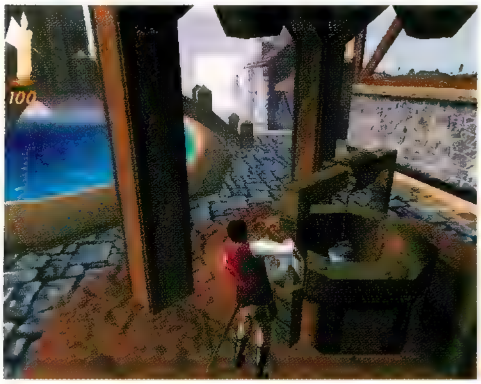
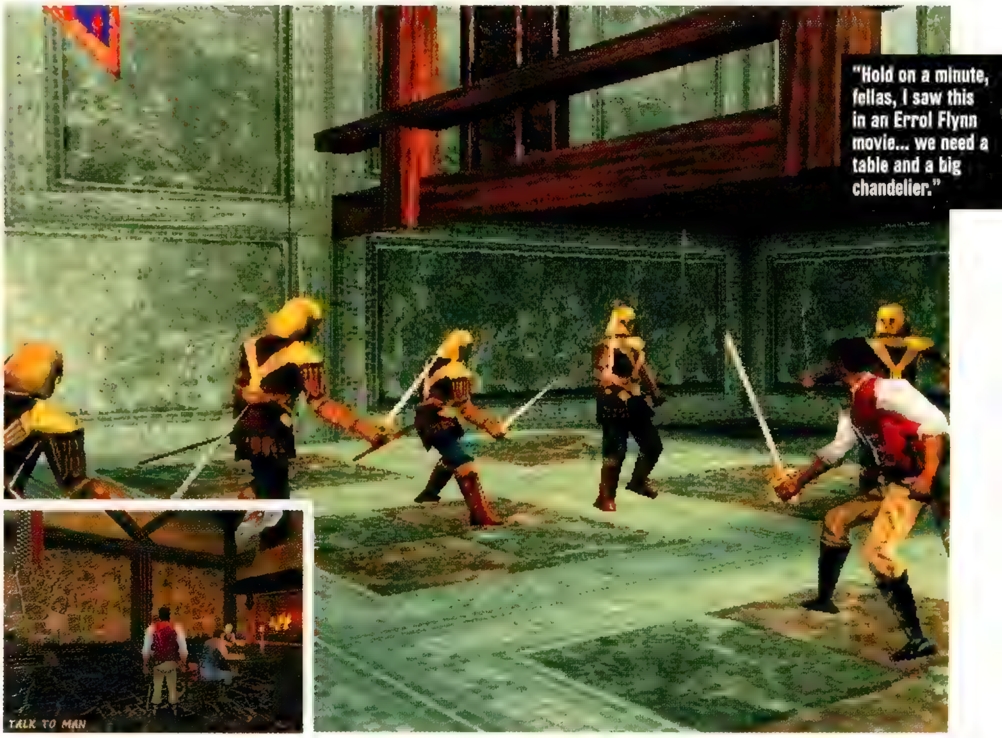


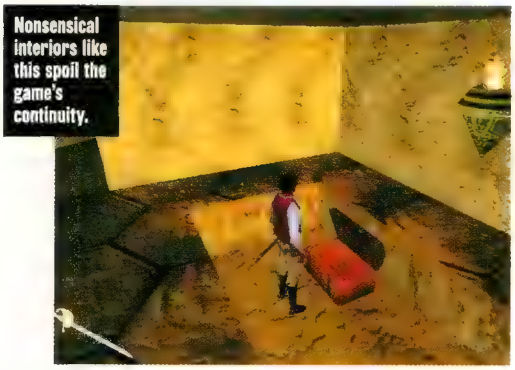


"Hold on a minute, fellas, I saw this in an Errol Flynn movie... we need a table and a big chandelier."

VERILY, t'was but a year ago that *Battlespire*, which came many leagues from distant Bethesda, did plague our PCs. And lo, it was not good. The *Elder Scrolls* series has been bumbling along for years now (this being the fourth instalment), and it's been a bumpy ride. What started out as a homage to the *Ultima Underworld* games, with dank dungeons and a hatful of stats, has obviously fallen under the alluring spell of the *Tomb Raider* series. But before you break open the sparkling grape juice, just bear in mind how that might be a *bad* thing.

Defensive

For example, *Battlespire*'s mouselook system has been ejected, so every single aspect of control and menu is keyboard-operated. The result is a rather ham-fisted movement system, where I often found myself over running and hurtling off precipices. Statistics are out the window as well, to be replaced with... erm... nothing, actually. At least you've got your health, which is represented by a flickering candle, and there are lots of things to collect and keep in your bottomless inventory. In fact, all this is a conscious effort on the part of Bethesda to break away from traditional role-playing towards the adventure genre. Tsk. Just when it was becoming fashionable, too.



Nonsensical interiors like this spoil the game's continuity.

> **"The actual business of fighting is pretty dull."**

So what's it all about? To cut a long and inscrutable story short, you play Cyrus and you have to find your sister. You start on the island of Stros M'kai with very little to go on, and are able to talk to the people you find as you wander around for clues. There's plenty of speech, and the interaction sequences are played out smoothly using the game engine. The story gradually unfurls via familiar expanding conversations trees, but it fails to inspire – clues and quests lack real intrigue and navigation is haphazard.

Combat is a major part of the game, and in this respect the lack of stats or a decent array of weapons is crippling. Because you don't improve your combat potential much, most enemies don't pose a significant threat; and the actual business of fighting is pretty dull. In theory, there are five different offensive moves, but they're arguably a bit pointless when you can kill your opponent using just one. Object-based and environmental puzzles litter the locations and are not too taxing, but logical enough to keep your interest. Climbing and swinging on ropes is a novel and fun feature, but one that is slightly over-used.

I've already mentioned the lack of atmosphere: critically, this is exacerbated by the by-now-traditional *Elder Scrolls* Disappointing Graphics™. From the poorly animated people and bland textures to unbelievably flat fireballs, nothing seems to be hugely improved by the mysterious magic of a 3D card. It's somewhere around the original *Tomb Raider* in terms of looks and puzzle depth, but is still lacking that game's originality, tension and verve. **ROSS ATHERTON**

■ Publisher **Virgin** ■ Developer **Bethesda** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P166, 32Mb RAM, x4 CD-ROM** ■ Recommended **P233, 32Mb RAM, 3Dfx, four-button gamepad** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.bethsoft.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

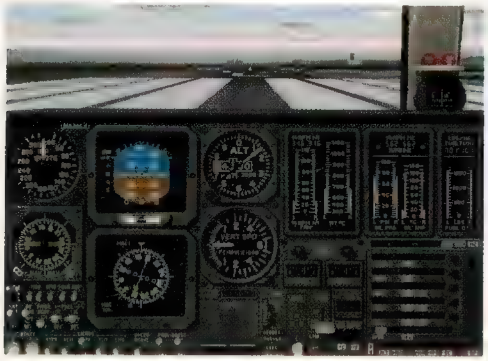
PC GAMER

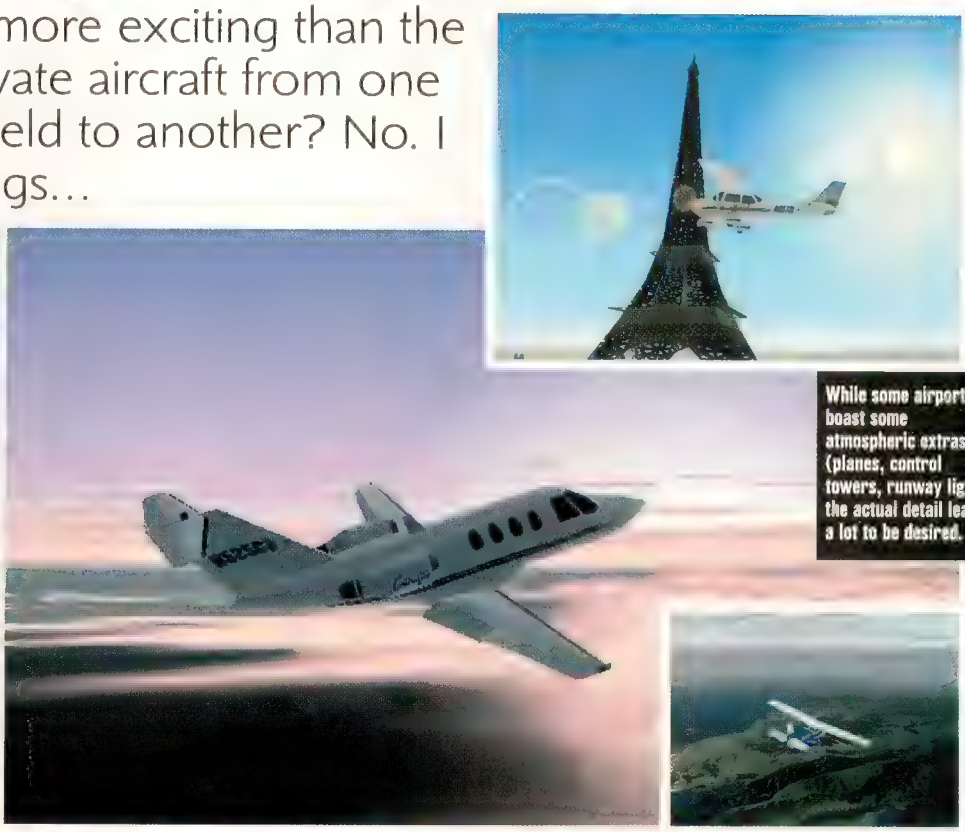
Workmanlike adventure sadly lacking in depth and atmosphere.

63%

PRO PILOT 99

Surely there's nothing more exciting than the thrill of flying a real private aircraft from one realistically located airfield to another? No. I can think of lots of things...





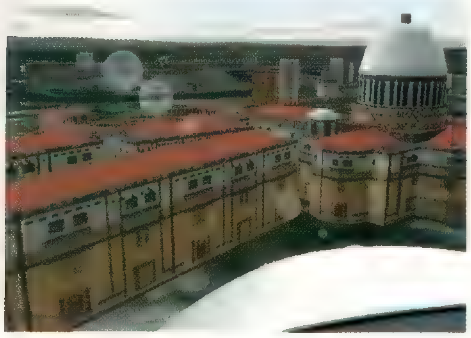
While some airports boast some atmospheric extras (planes, control towers, runway lights), the actual detail leaves a lot to be desired.

Routine

MAXIMUM realism. Minimum fun. It's the only way to describe the consult-the-manual-every-five-minutes joy of playing Sierra's civilian flight sim, *Pro Pilot 99*. Of course, if you *really* want to practise the ABCs of instrument flying; navigating your way between far-flung VOR beacons; or gliding tiny planes into large airports against feisty crosswinds, then this gauge-watching, radio-tuning air-fantasy is right up your airstrip.

Updated from the 98 version, *Pro Pilot 99* models six different aircraft – the single-engined Cessna 172 Skyhawk, Cessna 172R Skyhawk and Beechcraft V35 Bonanza; the twin-engined Beechcraft Baron 58 and Beechcraft Super King Air B200; plus a token jet, the Cessna CitationJet. And you can fly any one of them into the 3D accelerated skies above the US, Western Europe or Canada (at least the Montreal and Toronto bits) – mapped terrains that hide a total of 4,300 different airports.

If you still can't contain your excitement, let me tease you with the prospect of 30 Full Motion Video air lessons, a range of interactive flight tutorials, digitised co-pilot chatter and unparalleled cockpit detail – every switch, light and spinning dial recreated in commendable, animated minuteness. Not to mention the fact that this is the first private pilot's simulator to include Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation functions. Billed as 'The Complete Flight Simulator', it sounds impressive.



> **"Hours of dull, instrument-fiddling."**

From the static screenshots, it even shows promise that it could give *Microsoft's Flight Simulator* a run for its money. But real flying is a trade-off between hours of dull, instrument-fiddling and a spectacular aerial view. And while *Pro Pilot 99* simulates the rampant tedium of A to B soaring, it's less successful with the outside prettiness.

In truth, the ground detail is shockingly shabby – cities jut out on the horizon like jumbles of Lego bricks, while the very un-photorealistic terrain of Southern England is little more than a featureless, green/brown patchwork of dirt. The 'Complete Flight Simulator'? Far from it. What we needed was a plane game which combined the vast scope of *Flight Simulator 6*, with the eye-widening gorgeousness of *Flight Unlimited II*. Admittedly it's a tall order – *FUII* may be beautiful to look at but it only simulates a 10,000 square mile area of land. In comparison, *Pro Pilot 99* attempts to squeeze in most of the civilised West, allowing Americans who live in Bay Springs, Missouri, to fly from their local aerodrome (Thigpen Field), yet big enough to let me plan a quick jaunt from Wycombe's Booker airfield to the traffic-clogged skies over London's City Airport.

Yes, *Pro Pilot 99* has its problems (I managed to land on a lake, taxi around and then take off again...), but it compensates for some of them with an easy-to-use Windows interface, excellent avionics detail and a vast, intercontinental scope. For real pilots who wish to hone their beacon-tuning and waypoint flying skills, *Pro Pilot 99* may well be a useful tool. For the rest of us, it can't topple *Flight Simulator's* sheer comprehensiveness, nor hope to match *Flight Unlimited II's* outstanding beauty.

DEAN EVANS

■ Publisher **Sierra** ■ Developer **Dynamix** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P133, 32Mb, x4 CD-ROM** ■ Recommended **P266, 64Mb RAM** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, D3D** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.sierra-online.co.uk** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

Instrument flying at its most realistic – just don't look out of the windows.

73%

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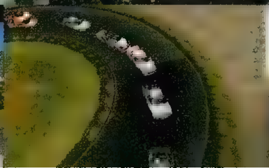
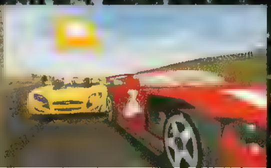
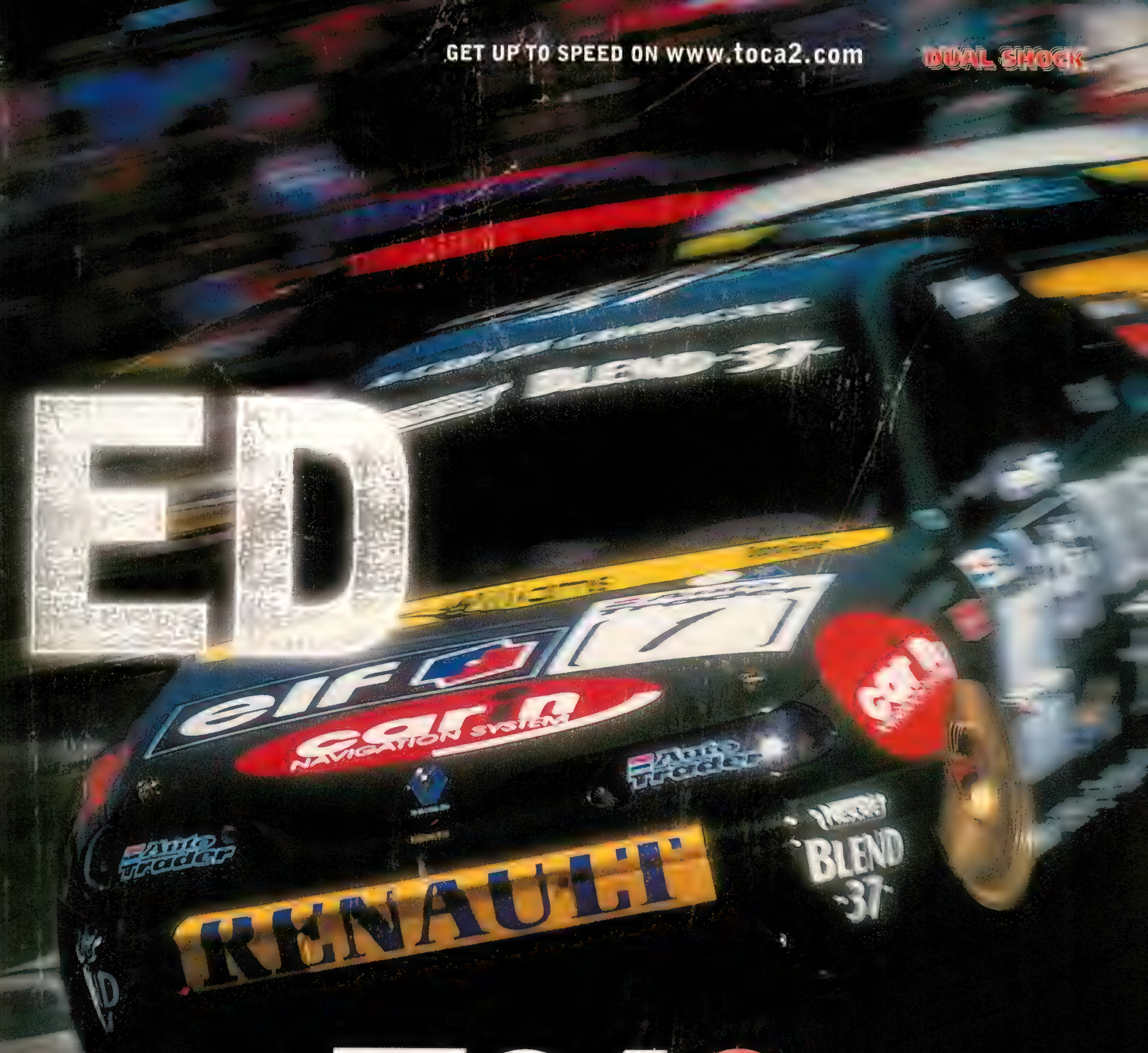


7 FURTHER MAKES OF RACING CARS





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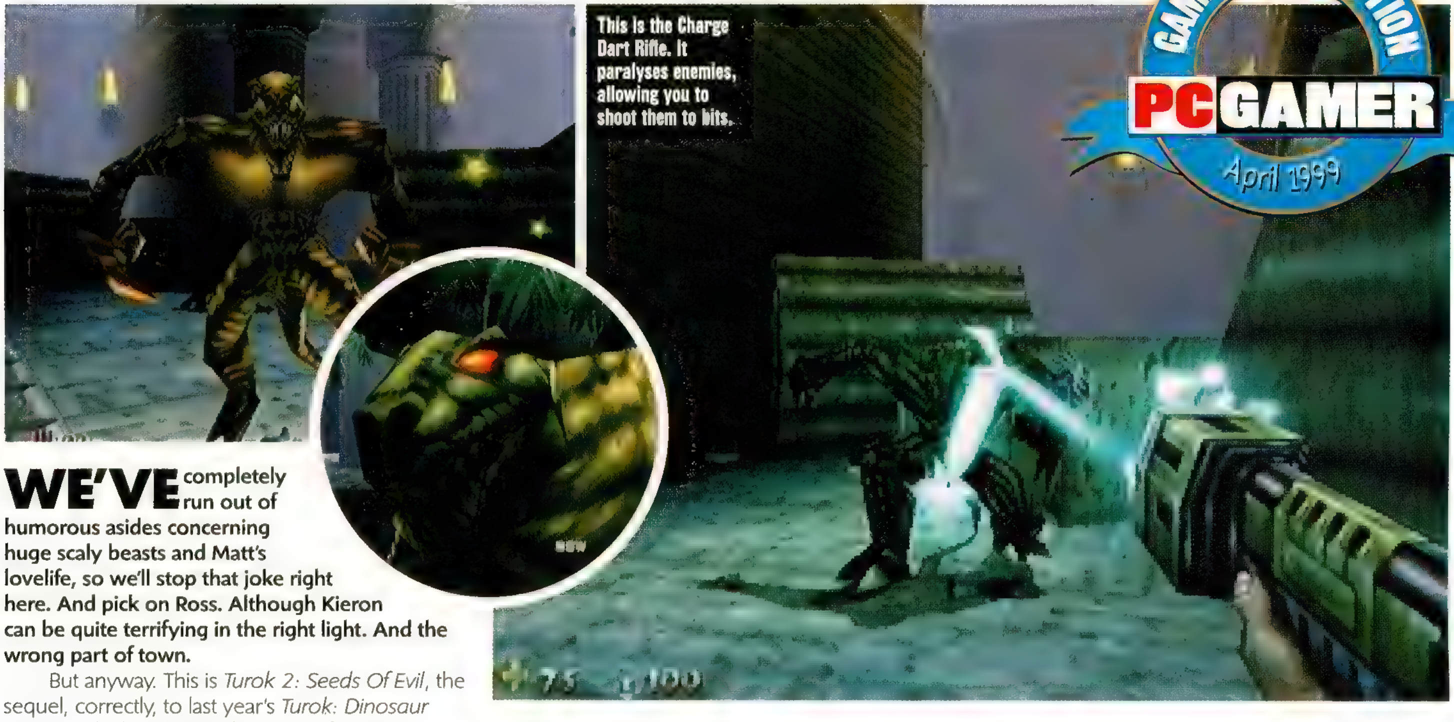
TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL

"Morning, Turok. We need you to save the world. Again."
"Damn those pesky seeds of evil."

GAME OF DISTINCTION
PC GAMER
April 1999


This is the Charge Dart Rifle. It paralyses enemies, allowing you to shoot them to bits.

WE'VE completely run out of humorous asides concerning huge scaly beasts and Matt's lovelife, so we'll stop that joke right here. And pick on Ross. Although Kieron can be quite terrifying in the right light. And the wrong part of town.

But anyway. This is *Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil*, the sequel, correctly, to last year's *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, which was great because of a) some startlingly over-the-top weaponry, b) ace graphics, and c) some cracking monsters and animations. It was also poor in that a) there was loads of fogging, b) it involved rather too much wandering around searching for keys, and c) there was no multi-player mode.

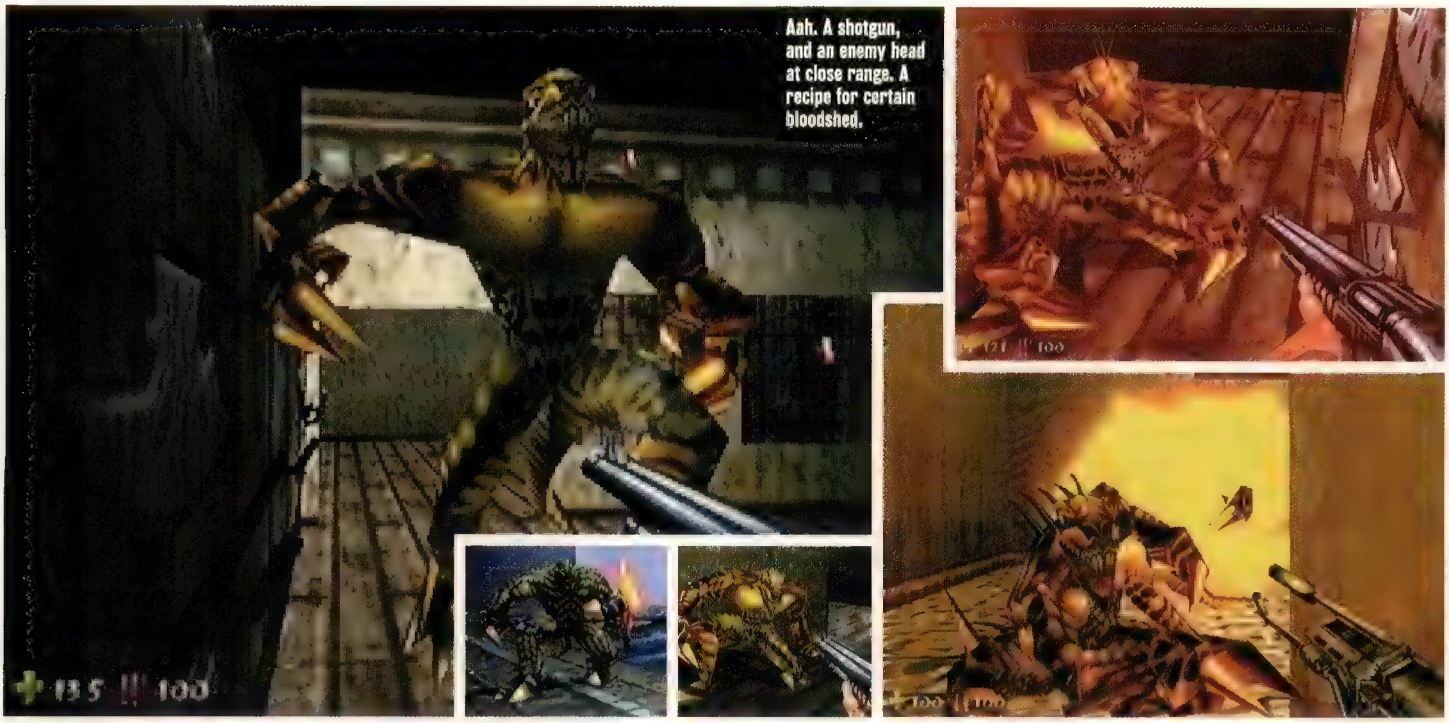
Turok 2 fixes at least one and a half of these problems, throws some *even more* entertaining weaponry on the top, allows you to – quite literally – blow the guts out of monsters *and* lets you ride a Styracosaurus. Equipped with huge, building-levelling cannons. Which means, empirically speaking, *Turok 2* is mostly a cracking ride.

> **"Gratuitous? Yes. Fun? Most definitely."**

The pedants amongst you, though, might like to know that this is a direct port of the N64 original, released just prior to Christmas in a flurry of critical acclaim, and thus the problems that afflicted that version are also prevalent here. In the main, this boils down to the size of the levels and *Turok 2's* emphasis on exploration and old school collect-the-keys mentality; each of the six killing floors are commendably huge, and admirably and intelligently designed as regards key-finding and puzzles. It's just that some of them are simply *too* big, leading to a teeth-gnashing, hair pulling amount of frustration. Level 4, Lair of the Blind Ones, is a case in point and the main offender, featuring multiple sink-holes that, if used at the wrong time, deposit you earlier in the level, which is mighty confusing. And Level 5, Hive of the Mantids, simply becomes too sprawling about halfway through, meaning that you get lost, unsure of what to do and where to go.

And the fogging hasn't entirely gone, either. Most of the time it's cut back to a fairly fine mist, unobtrusive enough but still noticeable, which, while a help to frame rates on Nintendo's machine, is mildly irksome here considering *Turok 2's* fairly hefty system requirements. Also consider that the N64 version uses a new-fangled 4Mb expansion

When the pensioner set the mine off, Alan was annoyed.



Aah. A shotgun, and an enemy head at close range. A recipe for certain bloodshed.

"Hang on, you've got something on your head... ah, got it." (sound of body hitting floor)

Rocking

pack that runs the game in 640x480 resolution, and makes it look appreciably 3Dfx, and it begins to seem like laziness on Iguana's part that such compromises remain.

Elsewhere, though, *Turok 2* is hugely enjoyable. Although you'll never find a use for every single one of the game's 25 weapons (the Sunfire Pod and Tranquiliser Gun are useless), the thought and imagination Iguana have put into *Turok's* arsenal is simply joyful. There's the Shredder, which fires beams of blue light that ricochet off every surface until they find soft flesh; the Scorpion Launcher, a triple-shot rocket launcher; the PFM Layer, which fires laser-assisted proximity mines that slice enemies off at the knees; and the very best flamethrower that we've ever seen. And then there's the ludicrously entertaining case of overkill that is the Cerebral Bore. Locking on to an intelligent enemy's forehead, it lets loose a screw-tipped missile that burrows deep into the cranium. Result: one spasming, flailing unfortunate with grey matter and blood pouring from their head. Until the bore explodes and takes their noggin clean off, that is.

Couple the weapons with some splendid animations and various hit-location shenanigans, and you've got some fantastically gruesome carnage. Hit the opposition at the right point, and you can sever limbs, torsos and heads from shoulders, accompanied by horribly – and wonderfully – detailed wounds. Bones protrude, blood sprays, your target falls to the ground twitching and rolling. On Level 3, The Death Marshes, it's possible to blow a hole clean through the stomachs of the hulking troglodytes that live there, allowing you to peer past their shattered ribs to whatever's behind them. Gratuitous? Yes. Fun? Most definitely.

Enemies will also act remarkably intelligently, retreating, using cover and generally making life very difficult. *Turok 2's* AI routines are far more polished than the much-trumpeted equivalents of, say, *Unreal*. When you first see an Endtrail duck behind a crate and circle around it as you approach him, you'll simultaneously laugh and think, "How on earth do I kill him?" And when he stands up, waves goodbye, and – in true Predator style – activates a cloaking device, you'll curse the swine.

Throw in sniper scopes, underwater weapons, mission objectives, repulsive man-size insects, huge bosses and a fine multi-player effort and you'll find *Turok 2* to be a huge improvement over its predecessor. It is, at times, tedious, thanks to a switch-pulling remit that should be extinct thanks to *Half-Life*, but hand-in-hand with its flaws lie dirty great swathes of imagination and inventiveness, things so often missing from the dozens of *Quake* clones that lazy developers foist upon us.

JES BICKHAM

SOCIAL MUTILATION

Full multi-player options adorn *Turok 2*, something conspicuously missing from its predecessor. And what's it like? Not bad, actually, featuring team play, Capture the Flag and straight-out gibfests. While the N64 version got deathmatch-specific arenas, though, the PC, curiously, has to make do with cut-down sections of the single-player levels. Although, while the N64 had to make do with only eight of the weapons, we get to frag with every single one, including the marvellous flamethrower. Also, there are nine different characters to choose from, each with differing health and abilities, from Turok and his grandpa to various monsters and the Raptor, which can't use weapons but has hoofing great claws, and is a bit nippy. Nice.

■ Publisher **Acclaim** ■ Developer **Iguana** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P200, 32Mb RAM, Win95, 3D card** ■ Recommended **P266, 32Mb RAM, Win95, 3D card** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx** ■ Multi-Player **Network, Internet** ■ Web Address **http://www.acclaimnation.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

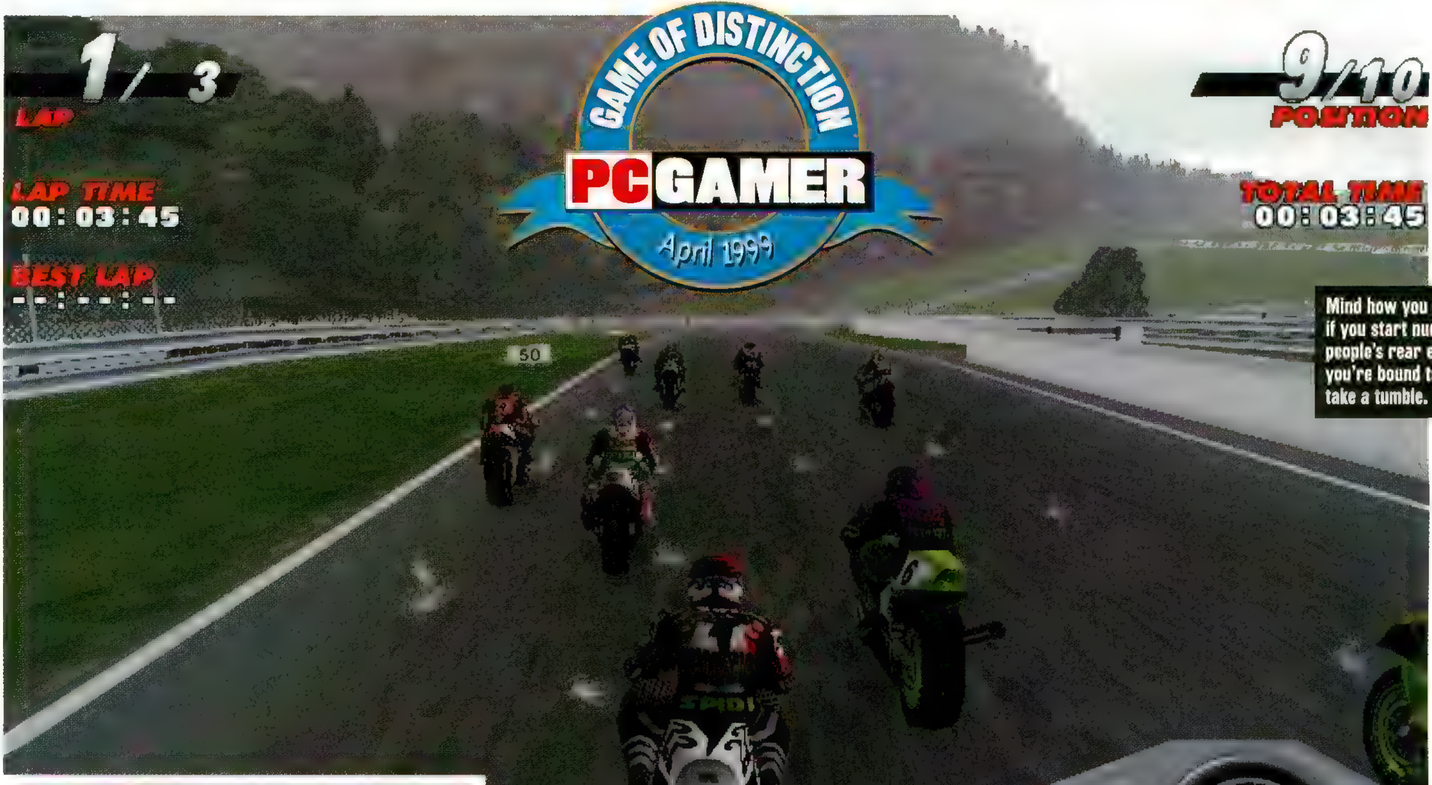
PC GAMER

Big, monster-filled fun. With a bit too much walking around.

89%

SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

All torque and no action? Hardly. Welcome to racing bike heaven…



Mind how you go – if you start nudging people's rear ends, you're bound to take a tumble.

CYCLE PARTS
TRANSMISSION
SUSPENSION
TRANSMISSION
TYRES
OK
LOAD
SAVE
EXIT

SELECT RIDER
SELECT RIDER

GRAND *Prix Legends?* **Fast** *cars.* ***Colin McRae Rally?*** **Muddy fast** *cars.* ***TOCA 2?*** **Expensive fast road cars. Missing the link here would be a schoolboy error.**

And yet, a good motorbike sim is a rare thing indeed. Beyond laugh-a-minute wheelie-popping beat-'em-ups such as *Road Rash* and the suicidal larks offered by *Motocross Madness*, little real attention has been paid to bike sims as a viable genre. It's only recently that we've seen the kind of titles *(Castrol Honda Superbike, GP500)* that would suggest that there are developers out there who are willing to make some headway with the genre.

It's fair to say that biking has become more popular in recent years than ever before, both as a form of recreation and for personal transport. There's also big money in the professional circuit, so it really makes sense for developers to grasp the bull by the horns and start cornering this potential market. And with *Superbike World Championship*, developers Milestone have really hit the nail on the head.

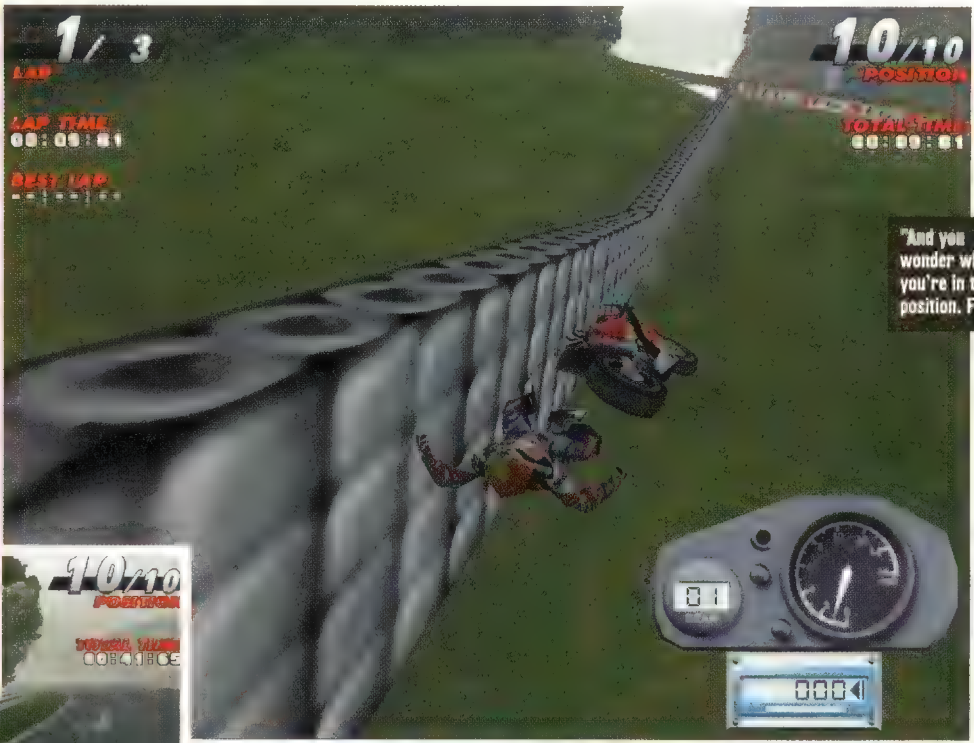
Get your knee down, you pansy...

SWC excels in nearly all areas. Visually, it's a peach; the bikes themselves are drop-dead gorgeous and instantly recognisable, and the action flies by at a magnificent rate. There's an inherent feeling of speed and power that puts many top racing games to shame, and that's a real first for a bike sim. But the aspect of *SWC* that really slides up beside you and nibbles your lobes – and it's a touch that your respect will only blossom for as you really get into the game – is the very *feel* of the bikes. Finally someone's hit upon the right combination of realistic leaning, good animation and sheer knee-down, tank-slapping action, incorporated them into a solid and convincing game engine, and packed the experience with the meatiest two-wheeled furies that money would have a hard time buying. The attention to detail is fantastic; pick up your bike after a nasty corner and rev away too hard, and you'll pop a first-gear wheelie that drops the rider on his back and sends your bike tooling off down the track. Exceed the bike's lean-limit on a wet bend,

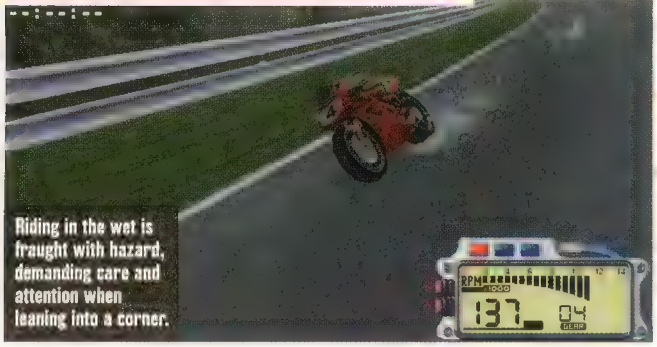
"Puts many top racing games to shame."

FOGGY'S A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW...

Carl Fogarty is, it seems, one of life's achievers. He's got the letters MBE after his name, he's the only professional rider to have *thrice* won the World Superbike Championship, and his daily bread and butter is earned by throwing about the near legendary Ducati 916. Lucky bugger. 'The Blackburn Bullet', as he's known on the racing circuit, attributes much of his success to his lucky green vest, which he always wears beneath his racing leathers. Whether Ducati's top rider ever washes said vest is unclear, but if it helps him to retain his throne, who are we to cast aspersions?



"And you wonder why you're in tenth position. Fool."



Riding in the wet is fraught with hazard, demanding care and attention when leaning into a corner.

Triumph

and it'll begin to slip away from beneath you, demanding some very subtle steering adjustment. It's testament both to some fine programming and some very accurate observation.

The best option for the first time rider is the Action game; the corners are easier to take, the bike is more stable in bad weather conditions and off the road, and you don't have to worry about the mechanical set-up. It's good for a knockabout razz around Brands Hatch or Monaco, and isn't too taxing on the brain cells or the reflexes. The Simulation option is an entirely different kettle of fish; you can't just throw the bike onto the verges and expect to recover. Clip a barrier or touch the grass at the side of the road and you'll tumble off at vertebrae-cracking speeds, after which your rider will have to make his way back to the bike, pick the thing up, push it into action, and hop back on. This means that you really have to become accustomed to the handling of the bikes before you start playing the serious championship races. The trick is not to get disillusioned early on – learn how to stay on the road in the Action game, and you've taken the first step to success.

DONINGTON
OK
BACK

When you take the inevitable step from Action to Simulation, another feature that you'll have to get to grips with is the adjustment of your bike's physiology. Certain aspects of your bike are, by default, selected for you; if you run a race in the rain, you can expect your bike to have wet tyres fitted. Other parts, such as the gear ratios and engine transmission, are left up to you. True enough, you can get by just fine with the pre-set options, but it's possible to squeeze more speed, handling and general performance out of your bike through some experimental twiddling.

And it's here that *WSC's* main fault lies: it's just a touch too easy. Play it in Action mode, and you'll have it licked within the first few races. In Simulation mode it may take a bit more time, but that owes more to perfecting your bike's set-up and applying the principles that you've learned in Action mode than any challenging driving or hardware on the part of the AI competition. The Simulation mode is where the real challenge lies, and as long as you can get to grips with the tracks on offer and get your head and hands around controlling the bike, then it shouldn't pose too much of a problem.

Don't let this put you off, though; if you fancy a racing game that charges you with learning the subtleties of an entirely different machine, then give *World Superbike Championship* a crack. If you're *au fait* with the motorbike sims currently on the shelves, then chances are you'll be pleasantly surprised.

AL BICKHAM

■ Publisher **EA** ■ Developer **Milestone** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P166, 32Mb RAM** ■ Recommended **P233, 32Mb RAM** ■ Graphics Accelerator **All major cards** ■ Multi-Player **Internet, LAN** ■ Web Address **http://www.ea.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

Detailed, gorgeous and fun. Don't expect it to last forever, though.

88%

THE PASSION. THE GLORY. THE FOOTBALL.

THE UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE. The very name conjures up the passion, the flair and the fervour of European football at its most scintillating. And now, UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE Season 1998/99 on PlayStation and PC gives you the opportunity to live and breathe every second of this heart-stopping competition.

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- The official product of the UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE for the 1998/99 season. Includes the real teams, player names, strips, logos and sponsors for the season.
- Includes all past winners of the competition from its European Cup roots to the present day Tournament.
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- Features accurate models of the most famous European stadiums.
- Real-time commentary from Europe's most recognised TV commentators.
- Fully skinned motion-capture models with advanced player AI.
- A wealth of up-to-date statistics for the 1998/99 season displayed in awesome hi-res UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE style graphics.

The Passion

THE GAME.

PC CD

PlayStation

UEFA
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
OFFICIAL LICENSED PRODUCT

Silicon Dreams

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CHAMPIONS LEAGUE®

SEASON 1998/99

OFFICIAL VIDEO GAME OF THE UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

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www.eidos.com

EIDOS

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

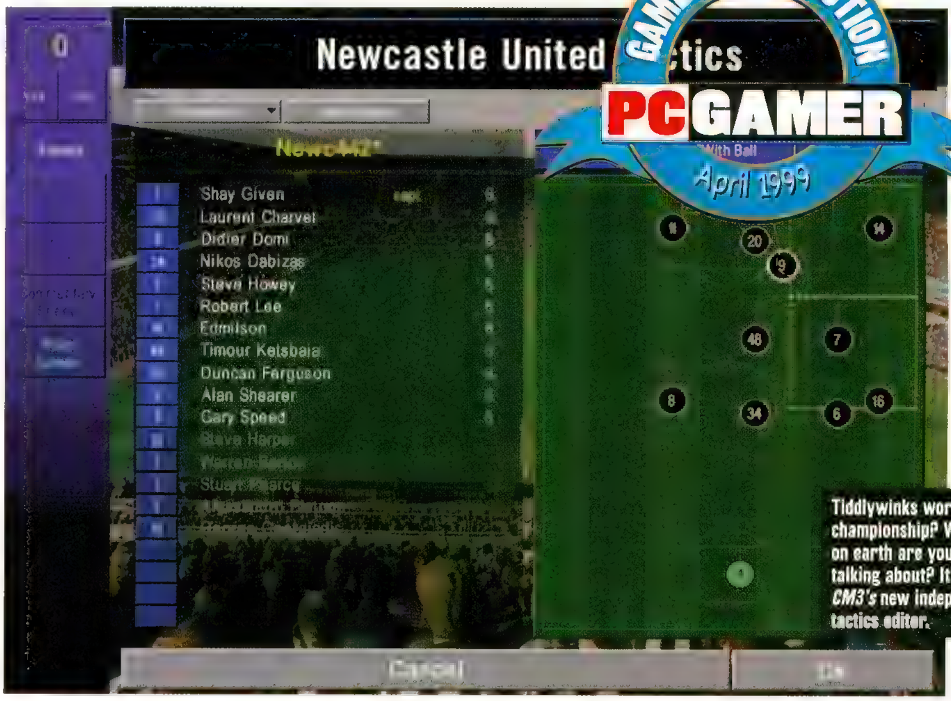
Thought you'd scaled the peaks of football management simulation? Perhaps you'd better look up.

HAVING reached the summit of Mount Everest for the first time, Sir Edmund Hilary famously remarked, "Bloody hell I'm knackered, but Christ just take a look at that view." Well maybe I paraphrased a little there but the sentiment is close enough and after winning my inaugural *Championship Manager 3* trophy I can certainly appreciate what he meant. This game is huge. Positively mountainous in fact.

Granted I'm still some way from its summit, having only been playing for about eleven solid days now, and it was only the minor peak of the 1999-2000 season League Cup which I bagged, but the genuine sense of satisfaction is nonetheless immense and as for the view... Well, I can almost see my house from here. I can certainly see all the players from my local conference league club and just about every major club from around the world come to that. I can see job opportunities opening up in Spain, Scotland and Japan, and am witnessing match after sublime match played out to its alarmingly convincing climax with rival crowds chanting and whistling in turn. Ahh it's just so beautiful it almost brings a tear to the eye.

Hard to believe that less than two weeks ago I was standing at the base of this magnificent outcrop and cursing its name. But I was. *CM3*, you see, is not the most approachable of games. At first, it's a bit like taking on K2 with only a Kagool and a claw hammer as you're confronted by a sheer face of statistics and text messages, with not a friendly football shaped option in sight. Oh I know that Sports Interactive have streamlined the interface with drop-down menus that make the most important menus more accessible, but it still lacks the intuitive touch, even for veteran players.

Moreover, on first impressions, the hyperlink system seems, if anything, too efficient; while tentatively grasping my way through the various screens every rogue click seemed to unleash another information avalanche of excessive statistics, details, filters or messages. And as for rushing through the first few matches to get a better handle on things... forget it. Before you've so much as witnessed a ball kicked in anger, you have to initiate a season deciding how many of the 16 international leagues to involve, survey your



Shay Given
Laurent Charvet
Didier Domi
Nikos Dabizas
Steve Howey
Robert Lee
Edmilson
Timour Ketsbaia
Duncan Ferguson
Alan Shearer
Gary Speed
Steve Harper
Warren Barton
Stuart Pearce

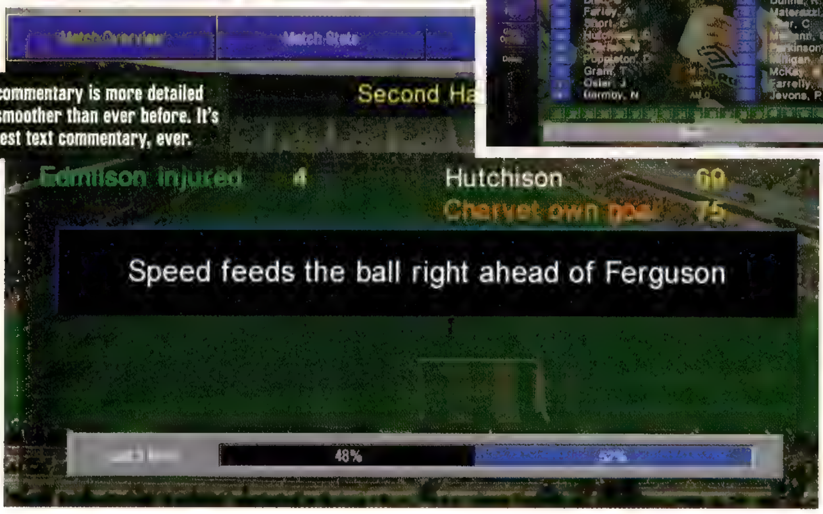
Tiddlywinks world championship? What on earth are you talking about? It's *CM3's* new indepth tactics editor.

> **"You'll become thoroughly enthralled."**

History
FIFA World Cup

Juventus Tactics

Everton Squad Numbers
Position(s)



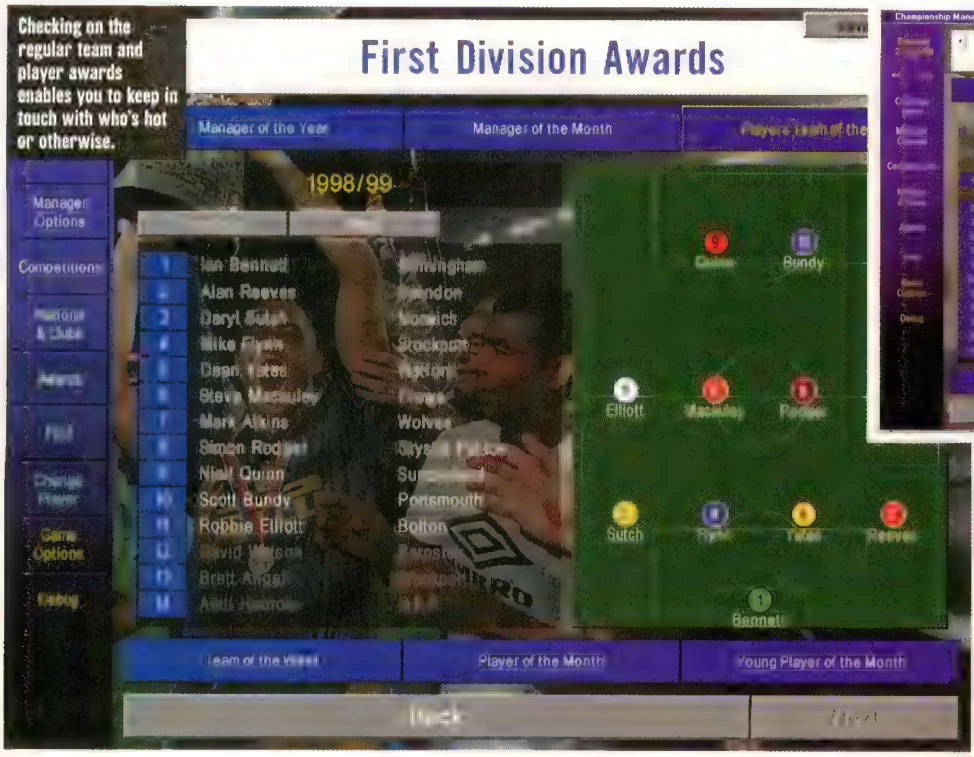
Edmilson injured 4
Hutchison 69
Charvet own goal 75

Speed feeds the ball right ahead of Ferguson

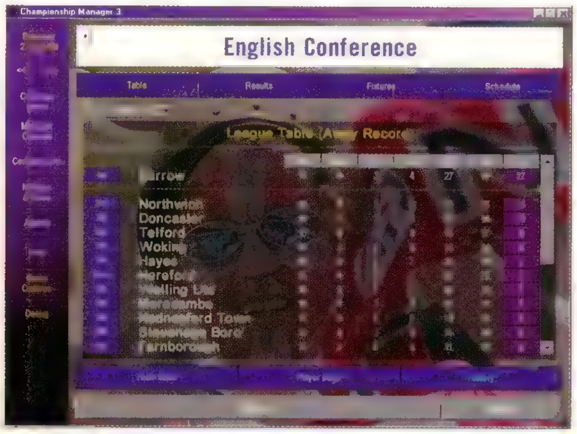
48% 52%

The commentary is more detailed and smoother than ever before. It's the best text commentary, ever.

League Table
Chelsea ENG
Celtic SCO
Ajax



Checking on the regular team and player awards enables you to keep in touch with who's hot or otherwise.



Hat-trick

first team and reserve squads to check out the pick of your talent (each player now has a total of 40 statistics) and possibly dabble in a more detailed transfer system (see 'Bargain buys' boxout).

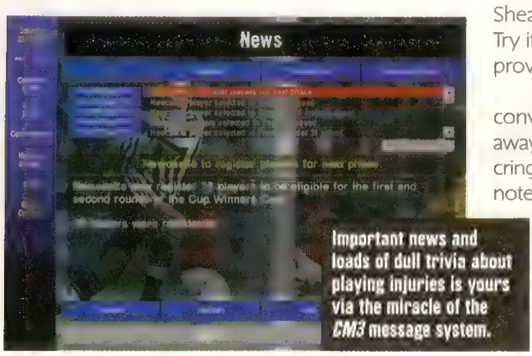
Once you've decided upon a starting line-up, there's the not inconsiderable matter of picking appropriate tactics; generic team instructions and defining a few simple individual runs or passing styles (don't stop to interfere with the advanced options at this point or we may never see you again); arranging a suitable pre-season friendly, tour or tournament to test them out; setting dates and rules and inviting teams as required (who will think about it then get back to you). Oh, and did we mention sorting out the new season squad numbers...

With so much to take in, it's understandable that a few of the less committed players will lose their way. But that in itself is no great disaster, for *CM3* is not a game for the dabbler. Persevere and when you finally reach the plateau of your first game you'll be able to sit back, relax and take a look at the most stunning achievement in football management yet seen.

You'll witness a delightfully fluid text commentary that in tandem with clever stereo crowd noise (the ambient sounds from each side of the speaker correspond to the team in possession and reflect the approximate number of supporters and match conditions) and a real-time match engine creates a far more immersive match atmosphere than any of the games featuring a 3D engine. After a couple of games you'll begin to see that the bewildering list of statistics do actually transform into amazingly realistic players, particularly when you start to fiddle around with the comprehensive tactics editor which enables you to designate player positions wherever the ball is at any one time. Think Big Duncan Ferguson should be playing closer to, but a little behind, Shearer to win the aerial ball and knock it down? Try it out and it'll actually work as you'd expect, provided you get the service right of course.

You'll become thoroughly enthralled as convincing opposition AI managers nip in to prise away the young prospects you were scouting and cringe as the e-mail message system conveys a note of concern from your chairman or a reserve team player demanding first team action. And as you begin to climb the tables yourself you'll realise that this is just the very beginning. There are literally thousands of nuances to account for en route, like the youth-team league which you can directly manage in if you've got enough reserve players, or the ability to set up pre-season tournaments with your own rules, or the myriad divisional awards for individual players or team of the week, or the way you can unsettle otherwise unavailable players by making your transfer bids public, the way some players respond well to a little competition while others disappear or demand a transfer.

Sure you'll tumble down a few rocky precipices on the way, but it'll just make you all the more determined to reach the summit. And when you do finally look down from the heights of domestic, European or even International success (don't mention the afterlife!) you'll see that all the world is indeed football shaped. **CHRIS JAMES**



Important news and loads of dull trivia about playing injuries is yours via the miracle of the *CM3* message system.

BARGAIN BUYS

The transfer market has always been the main route to success in *Championship Manager* games and it's no different here. The first time you reach for the transfer list, though, you'll witness a few changes from the conventional system. The traditional 'quick search' option has been streamlined with filters enabling you to pinpoint appropriately skilled players more easily. If that's still too much effort for you, then why not take advantage of the new scout system (provided your club can afford one) which enables you to send your chain-smoking staff member to an appropriate nation or region anywhere in the world, then let them root through the talent available.

Further subtleties are unveiled once you alight upon a suitable player as you're invited to negotiate all sorts of 'sweeteners' for the deal including subsequent payments after ten national appearances, percentage of selling on fee and whether or not to make the bid public (which could potentially unsettle the player you're after) and if the player's interested there are yet more negotiations to be undertaken as wages and clauses are haggled out.

Real Madrid
Negotiate Dortmund bid for Karembeu
Total Value

■ Publisher **Eidos** ■ Developer **Sports Interactive** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM** ■ Recommended **Windows 95/98, Pentium 266, 64Mb RAM** ■ Graphics Accelerator **All major card** ■ Multi-Player **Up to eight, network** ■ Web Address **http://www.champman.net** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

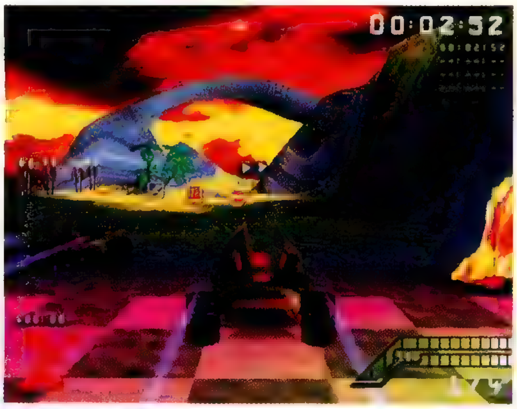
The most in-depth, compelling, realistic footy manny game ever.

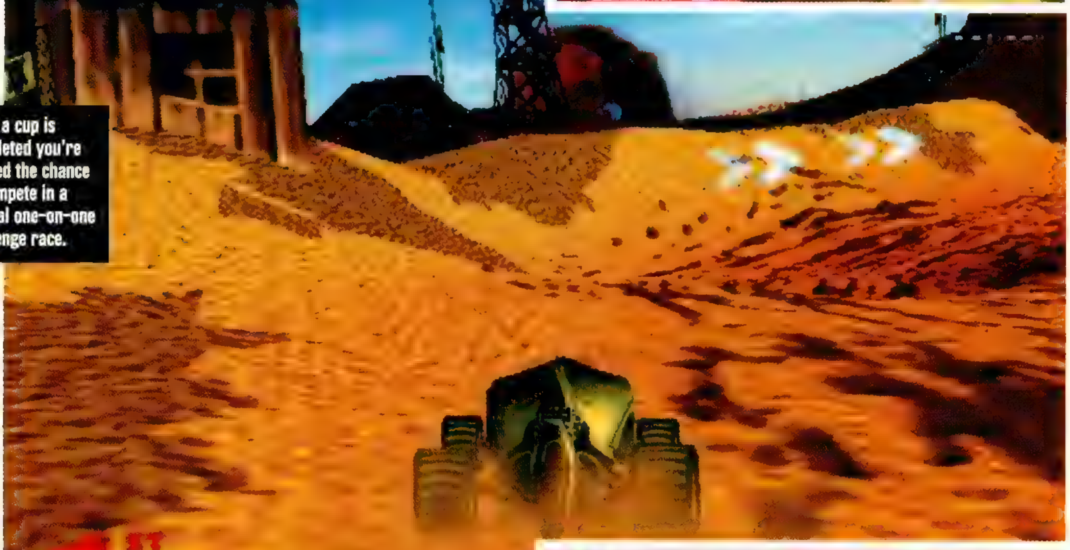
91%

SCARS

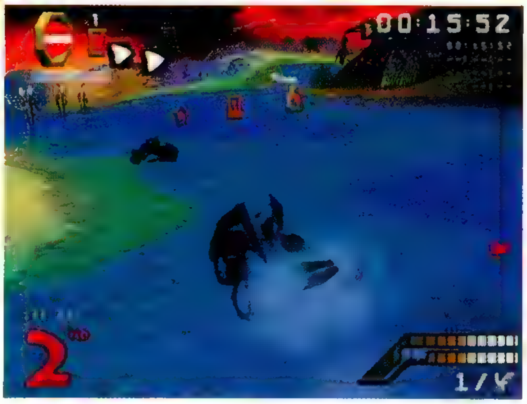
Not at all as painful as the title might suggest…

■ Publisher **Ubi Soft** ■ Developer **Vivid Image**
■ Price **£30**





After a cup is completed you're offered the chance to compete in a special one-on-one challenge race.



PICTURE, if you can, the year 3000. Humans are no longer Earth's masters, replaced by nine super computers of enormous intelligence. So advanced are these giant artificial brains that they've developed emotions, as well as a distinctly human-like competitive edge. The world is such an ordered place that these mental colossi must find some other distraction to vent their competitive drive; one of the most noble and testing sports known to man. *Mario Kart*. Yes, these hyper-evolved digital entities have developed a simulated activity that bears an uncanny resemblance to that popular Nintendo classic. What's more, to facilitate the title's terrible acronym each computer drives a car based on a creature from the Earth's past; hence *Super Computer Animal Racing Simulation*. Crikey.

So, the premise is clearly a load of old tosh, but on the bright side at least we've got the PC's first *Mario Kart*-clone in ages (the last one was *Street Racer*, another Vivid Image game, funnily enough). In the unlikely event that you're unfamiliar with the whole comedy-combat racing genre, here's a quick synopsis. A bunch of wacky cars race round a track just like in an ordinary racing game, but thanks to the presence of the various power-ups that litter the track they get to beat the hell out of each other in a knockabout manner.

> **"Often thrilling and great fun to play."**

SCARS is a little more serious than most, but behind the technological facade it's pretty similar to its forebears. This is 1999, though, and thanks to accelerator technology things are looking pretty swell, though perhaps a little gaudy at times. The plentiful courses aren't the flat speedways you might expect from this sort of game, though; instead they twist and turn all over the shop. The power-ups are also a bit more vicious than you might have experienced, ranging from missiles to hugely irritating magnetic traps.

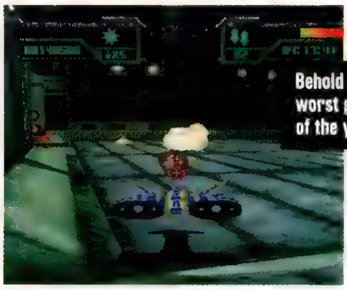
SCARS is often thrilling and great fun to play, especially since it's not as rock-hard as most other racing games seem to be these days. What's more, there's a split-screen two-player option and a facility to create your own custom tournaments; and with the emphasis firmly on arcade accessibility the game succeeds at what it aims to do. There's nothing revolutionary here, and we've seen *SCARS*' elements many times before, but that doesn't stop it being jolly good fun.

TIM CANT

PC GAMER

Great stuff if you're bored of normal driving games. Bring a friend for even more fun.

75%



Behold the worst game of the year.

ELIMINATOR

■ Publisher **Psygnosis**
■ Developer **Magenta**
■ Price **£30**

There exists a special university where future game designers are taught how to carve the graceful forms of digital art with the chisel of their minds. In the introductory lecture the elderly professor solemnly passes around copies of *Eliminator*, just to show them exactly what not to do. And for them to laugh at… but only because they haven't paid for it. This is a game that creationists could use as evidence against the existence of evolution, and evolutionists could use as evidence against the existence of our Lord in heaven.

Your hovership-cum-Tupperware-dish is herded through the game by the cunning expedient of having a gate open when you've killed all the foes in a room. Your blaster's barrage is depicted by a series of small circles. The awesome flurry of rockets is simulated by a *series* of small circles. When one of your foes is defeated, usually because their Blue Peter toilet-roll form wanders aimlessly into your line of fire, they explode in (wait for it) a large circle. When you're defeated you explode… but your undamaged ship is clearly visible when the fire eventually dies away. I would describe the level design as hopelessly 8-bit, but it would be an unforgivable insult to them.

Consider the example of the first end-of-level boss (the fearsome fairground carousel) as evidence for *Eliminator*'s incompetence. You're meant to fire at its feet to defeat it. There's no hint whether you're hurting it or not, and though we fired at it constantly for minutes on end, it wouldn't die. But neither did we because it couldn't aim. The stalemate only ended when we got so bored we couldn't be bothered to move, and eventually got hit by a random shot. Paying my council tax is more interesting than fighting this impotent behemoth.

Good points, then? *Eliminator* runs at a decent, wizzy pace. And I'm getting paid to play it. Though, after some reflection, not quite enough.

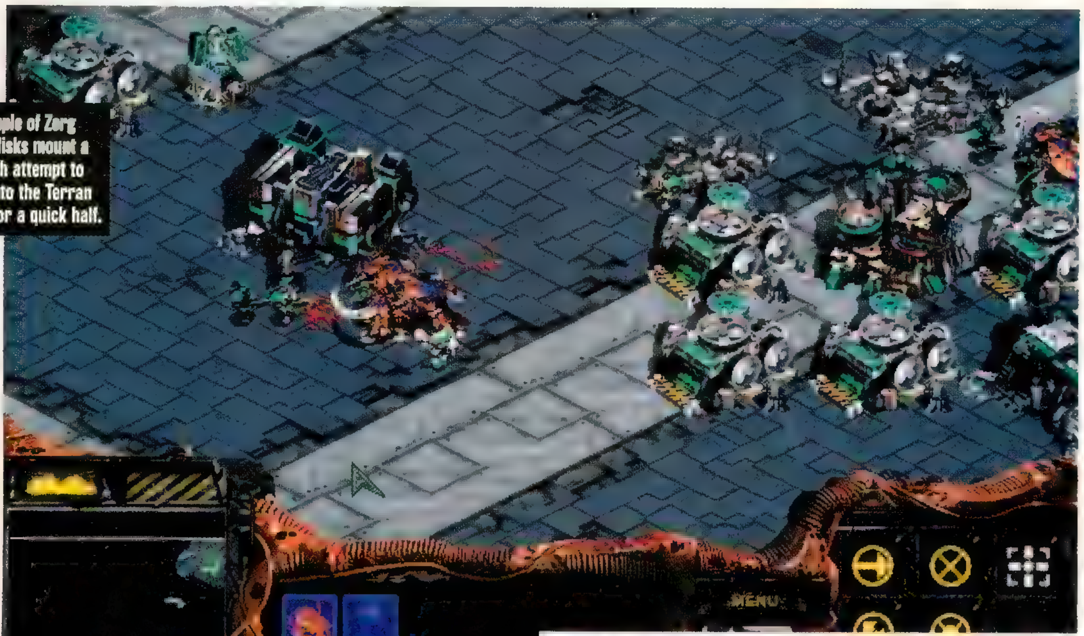
KIERON GILLEN

13%

STARCRAFT EXPANSION SET:
BROOD WAR

Starcraft's latest expansion set is spawned, but it's really nothing to get broody over...

■ Publisher **Sierra** ■ Developer **Blizzard** ■ Price **£20**



A couple of Zerg Ultralisks mount a foolish attempt to get into the Terran bar for a quick half.

AN expansion: an enlargement or growth in scale or scope. That's what my dictionary has to say on the matter, and it's never failed in its designated role before. Apply this interpretation to *Brood War*, and you might notice a couple of discrepancies – particularly with regard to that bit about 'growth in scale or scope'.

Not that you'd expect an entire engine overhaul, or anything particularly earth-shattering from an expansion pack. But in relation to the original game, *Brood War* essentially offers you the same experience which, if you were a fan of *Starcraft* the first time round, might not be an altogether bad thing. The meat of the matter is that *Brood War* offers more new frills than new thrills, begging the question: is there enough new stuff in there to warrant the extra expenditure?

> **"Offers more new frills than new thrills."**

What you really get is 26 new missions spread across three campaigns, one for each race. They're similar to the ones in the original and the same old problems are lurking in the shadows: the AI *still* isn't up to much, reacting as predictably as ever to your commitment and use of battlefield forces and resources. As for new units – the staple of strategy add-on packs – you get a paltry two per army. Compare this to the multitude of extras that became available with *TA's Core Contingency* add-on pack, and you'll begin to feel a mite swindled. As far as changing the balance of forces goes, the new units alter things not a jot; the Protoss Attack Carrier is still the rudest piece of hardware ever to grace your monitor, and with the new Protoss air-support gunship to protect it, it's now even better than before.

None of which detracts from *Starcraft*'s charms, though, and the new units do add a whiff of cologne to the old boy's jowls, if little else. And if multi-play's your bag, then the 100 new maps should raise a smile. That's assuming you're unaware that you can find any number of maps on the Internet anyway...

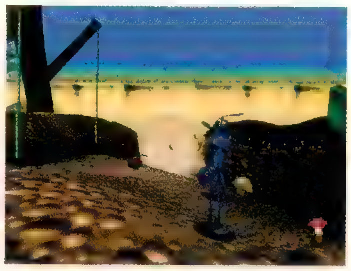
Brood Wars adds nothing new to the pickled walnut that is real-time strategy. What it does is to tack a few new features onto an existing game, but perhaps not enough to justify its price-tag. As it stands, you'd have to be a really committed *Starcraft* fan, or a little blind, not to feel a tad cheated.

AL BICKHAM

PC GAMER

***Starcraft* gets a lick of paint and little else. Only big fans of the original need apply.**

69%



DISNEY'S
ACTION GAME, DISNEY/PIXAR A BUG'S LIFE

■ Publisher **Disney/Pixar**
■ Developer **Travellers Tales**
■ Price **£30**

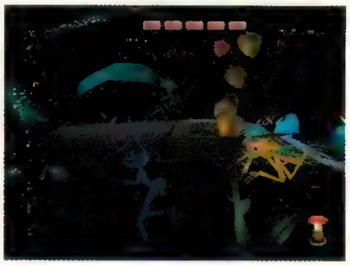
So, you'd like to experience a bug's life, eh? You'd like to crawl round in the dirt all day, only to get covered in excrement and then die? Well, sadly there are no job vacancies at PC GAMER at the moment, but don't fret as this ludicrously titled movie tie-in from Disney/Pixar could be just what you're looking for. *Disney's Action Game, Disney/Pixar A Bug's Life* (DAGD/PABL for short) is a *Mario 64*-style platformer that stars Flik, the pastel coloured ant hero from the hit movie A Bug's Life.

It's his job to save his hive from a bunch of horrible bullying grasshoppers by traversing the game's treacherous 3D levels and defeating a selection of bosses. First, however, it's advisable to visit the training stage. In this tutorial, Flik is instructed in the ways of ant heroism by one of his little blue buddies. By the end of it he'll have learned to throw berries in self defence, jump, crush baddies using his butt and grow a variety of plants. That's right – as well as the usual platform game tactics Flik also has to utilise special seeds located throughout the game's levels to grow plants that help him reach power-ups or higher ground.

It's a nice idea, and it's not the only one. *DAGD/PABL* is full of potentially great sections, but tragically they're all wrapped up in the tedious, mediocre running-round-shooting-things bits. *DAGD/PABL* could have been a rather jolly platformer, but as it stands it's a bit of an anticlimax.

TIM CANT

42%



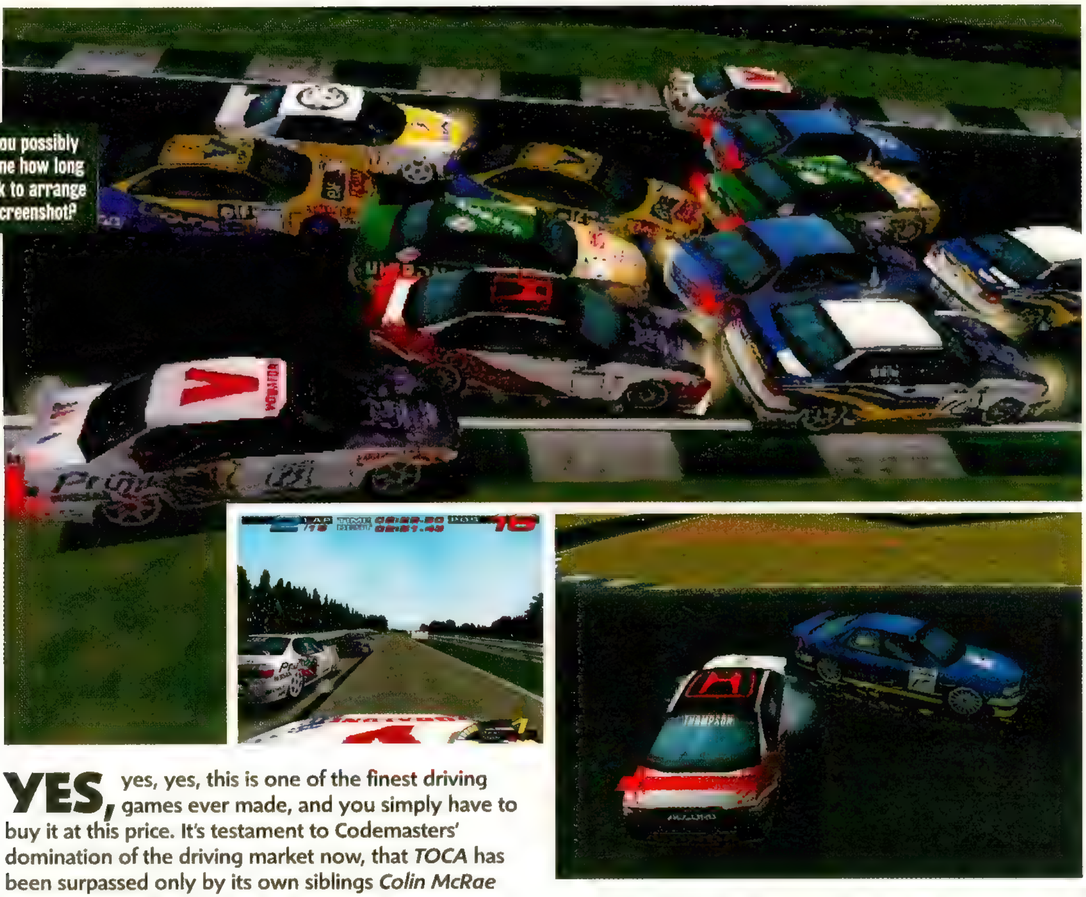
THEY'RE BACK!

The arrival of spring: the heralding of new life, flowering plants, budding trees, a collection of previously released games being sold for less than before.

By STEVE OWEN

TOCA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

■ Publisher **Codemasters** ■ Price **£13**



Can you possibly imagine how long it took to arrange this screenshot?

YES, yes, yes, this is one of the finest driving games ever made, and you simply have to buy it at this price. It's testament to Codemasters' domination of the driving market now, that *TOCA* has been surpassed only by its own siblings *Colin McRae Rally* and now *TOCA 2*. No-one else has come close to combining arcade action and simulated handling to produce such a great mix of challenge and reward.

The handling of the cars in *TOCA* may prove a little frustrating at first: they tend to want to lose the back end if you turn too hard or enter a corner too quickly, leaving you spinning over the grass for precious seconds. But it is one of the few games that's easily driven with either a steering wheel, joystick and even the keyboard. Graphically *TOCA* is starting to look a little dated, although with the assistance of a 3Dfx card it maintains a healthy frame rate, even on a P166.

Codemasters' arcade background means that your progression through the game is strictly scripted. Unlike *Grand Prix 2*, say, the tracks get consistently harder; even though they are accurately modelled on the real courses. Instead, Codemasters have created wet races or more aggressive computer drivers, rewarding your progress with cheat codes and bonus cars. There are limitations to the game, though. The weather is consistent at each track, pit-stops aren't featured, and car set-ups make precious little difference to the overall performance of your vehicle.

> "One of the finest driving games ever made."

It's incredibly tough to make your way through the championship – a ten second lead can be undone by one slight mistake – but the joy of the real sport has been wonderfully recreated. It's constant overtaking, nudging to gain positions and spectacular crashes, just as you would hope. In two words: bumper ballet.

PC GAMER

Indispensable stuff, this is a little tricky at first but very rewarding and great fun.

88%

WORLD OF COMBAT 2000

■ Publisher **Novalogic**
■ Price **£35**

Purveyors of user-friendly simulators, Novalogic have always enjoyed moderate if not outstanding success. Each game tends to be thoroughly enjoyable while rarely ground-breaking. This compilation proves the rule, consisting as it does of three war-type games: *Comanche 3*, *Armoured Fist 2* and *F22 Raptor*.

The first is a helicopter sim, letting you fly that funny looking thing with the enclosed rotors that you get a glimpse of at the start of Tomorrow Never Dies. Predictably it's a more simplified simulator than *Longbow 2* or *Apache Havoc*, but the missions are strangely compelling, thanks in some part to the lovely graphics. Lots of explosions, lots of enemies to shoot down, and lots of ways to prove yourself better than the enemy.

Armoured Fist 2 is far more enjoyable than you would imagine a tank simulator to be. Once again Novalogic's love of Voxel graphics means that the terrain is lovely and rolling, essential for hiding from the enemy tanks. Popping up to take them out can induce minor panic

F22 Raptor is the update to *F22 Lightning II*, and very nice it is too. While surpassed by the F-16/MiG combo pack released before Christmas, it's still an enjoyable, if rather simplistic, simulation, missing out on dynamic campaigns.

Overall, *World Of Combat* is a great mix of engaging simulations, each of which encourages multi-player games over Novalogic's own Internet gaming service. Good value, solid content.

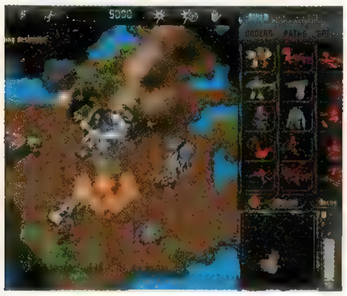
86%

DARK REIGN

■ Publisher **Activision**
■ Price **£13**

You have to feel sorry for Activision and the designers of *Dark Reign*. Pipped at the post by *Total Annihilation* – a better real-time strategy game – which was released just one week before *Dark Reign*, they've now been scuppered again, thanks to the budget re-release of *TA* at Christmas.

The problem is, why would you buy *Dark Reign*? *TA* is better and bigger, more varied and more exciting. The answer is, well, *Dark Reign*'s a great game too. You'd definitely need to have plenty of time on your hands to get through both of them, but you'd have a hell of a time doing it, as they're both massive games with long campaigns.

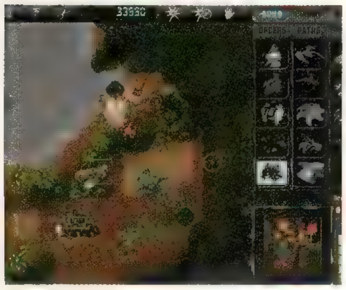


The elements that seemed so revolutionary when we first looked at the game have, naturally, been used by everything released around the same time, or since. It has terrain that affects visibility and firing range, encouraging the capture of high ground, which gives rise to some very enjoyable bloodbaths in valleys during ambushes.

Waypoints and the customisation of artificial intelligence are included, the latter allowing you to specify the level of autonomy of your units. Should they charge after an enemy unit, or hold their position? Attack to the death or leg it when they get low on health?

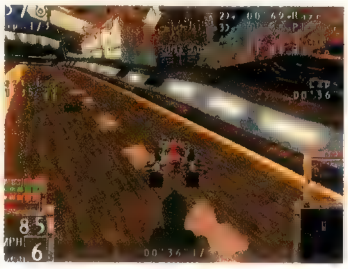
All very commendable, then, and all thoroughly playable, but, well, you don't get anything for being second, do you? It's a great game, and if you're as fed up of waiting for *Tiberian Sun* to appear as we are, this might be worth a go.

79%



POD GOLD

■ Publisher **Ubi Soft Classique** ■ Price **£13**



The French are a funny bunch. We've said it often, and it remains true, even after they won the World Cup (which isn't funny, just a little bit annoying). Cryo came up with *MegaRace*, and Ubi Soft have just re-released their futuristic racer, *Pod*.

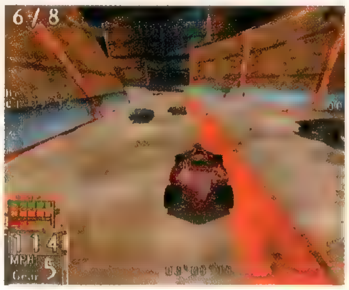
It's got some ridiculous plot line, where there is only room for one more person on some spaceship or other before the Earth is destroyed, and so you've decided to race to see who gets it, or some old toss like that.

But for all this silliness, the racing isn't too bad. Originally touted as the first MMX game (which made little difference to the visual quality since, as we now know, MMX is far from great), it still looks quite reasonable, and at least shifts along at a fair old pace.

The Gold in the title hints at the added goodies included, such as improved network support, 16 new tracks and eight shiny new vehicles. The collection of tracks is entertaining – generally better than today's boring equivalents. After all, where are the jumps and gaps in today's Formula One races? Hey? Quite. They're pretty weird, too: there are tracks which are set on bizarre planets, a great one round a volcano and plenty based on futuristic cities.

But after the inventive track design (which makes for genuinely enjoyable multi-player racing) *Pod* is worryingly anorexic. The handling is simplistic and unbelievable, while crashes refuse to upset your championship hopes. There is a fair amount of customising you can do, but ultimately *Pod* is pretty shallow arcade racing, which only highlights its lack of long-term enjoyment.

73%

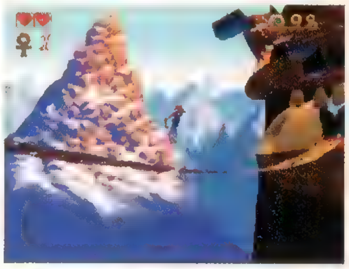


PANDEMONIUM 2

■ Publisher **Kixx** ■ Price **£5**

The PC has always struggled to cope with the staple diet of console entertainment – the platform game. We can't think of a single worthwhile platform game for the lumbering behemoth of desk-based entertainment, and it's probably just as well. They really aren't very good when compared to the wonders of games like *Half-Life*, *TOCA 2* and *Grim Fandango*.

Sure enough, *Pandemonium 2* is pretty poor, worse, even, than its own precursor. It's all unimaginative, bog-standard platform fare, featuring far too many pixel-perfect jumps, baddies that can be dispatched by jumping on top of them (none of the 'everything hurts' strategy of the ancients, such as *Manic Miner*), and sprawling, themed levels.



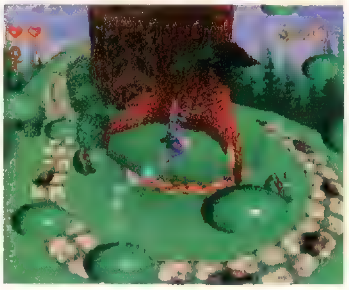
But the developers don't deserve to put themselves in the same school as the masters of the genre. The Japanese have platformers sewn up (as it were), with *Sonic*, *Mario* and even, to an extent, *Crash Bandicoot* simply oozing style and imagination.

Pandemonium 2 demonstrates neither. Instead we are offered an enormously breasted (and, it has to be said, rather attractive) female character, (dis)ably assisted by some bozo in a jesters outfit.

Unlike the latest true 3D 'platformers' (*Mario 64* and *Sonic Adventures*), *Pandemonium 2* remains a 2D game on 3D rails. The engine is polygonal, but you still travel either backwards or forwards, while the camera swoops dizzyingly and ineffectually.

In essence, then, it's all rather tedious. And if we want big-breasted girls, we'll play *Tomb Raider*.

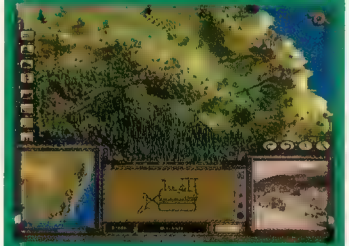
56%



AND THE REST...

***Andretti Racing* (71% – £13, EA Classics) is a competent enough simulation of Indy Car racing, but it's just far too dull for the British market. If you're expecting long and very boring ovals, you will be far from disappointed; but if you have any sense of fun, you will be. Technically reasonable, otherwise, but dull, dull, dull.**

EA have also released *Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain* (62%) for our gaming pleasure, a snip at £13. It's a top-down simplified RPG, or a slightly more complicated version of *Gauntlet*, depending on how you prefer to look at it. It's another comic conversion, and you get to play a sort-of bad guy, which at the very least is refreshing.



There's a couple of Sold Out games going for a fiver too. *Player Manager 2 Extra: Chase For Glory* (42%) attempts to meld arcade football with management, but both elements are too lightweight to satisfy. *Sensible Soccer* is probably a better bet if you want to play football and manage your side for less than two London pints.

***Railroad Tycoon Deluxe* (61%) is a lovely bit of strategy history and another massive hit for Sid Meier, but it's looking decidedly long in the tooth. If you thought *Civ* looked ugly then you'd better not look at this game right after eating. It's a pig.**

FORGOTTEN REALMS

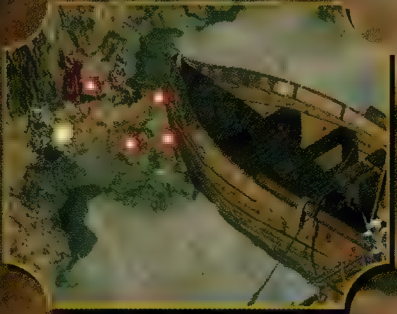
-Campaign Setting-

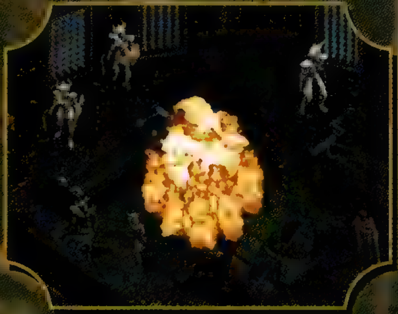
Baldur's Gate™

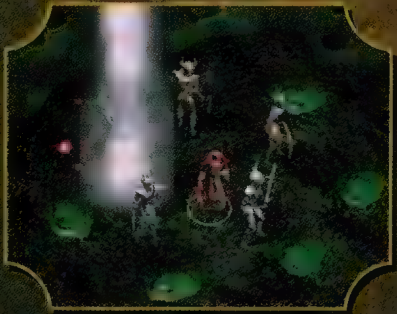
An RPG game worth dying for.

Enormous, Epic, Extraordinary.
PC Gaming World 5/5

The best AD&D RPG game ever beheld.
PC Home 95%

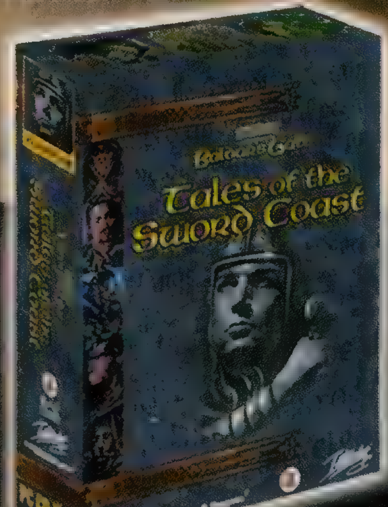






Baldur's Gate is the next generation, real-time, isometric RPG set in the most popular Advanced Dungeons & Dragons world, the FORGOTTEN REALMS®.

- Be prepared to immerse into a world of intrigue and mystery.
- Explore an immense, intricate game world rendered in 16-bit SVGA graphics.
- Create your character from six AD&D, races and 26 different classes and subclasses.
- Push your leadership skills to the limit as you guide a party of up to six characters.
- Invoke more than 100 spells.



BALDUR'S GATE:
TALES OF THE SWORD COAST
COMING SOON!!

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be used with UK version
of Baldur's Gate.

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Virtual love and virtual killing are all well and good, but you'll have to spend serious cash to find happiness in either. Unless you're the voyeuristic type, in which case you can just let us do all the chasing for you.

ON-LINE GAMING

Wireplay
The games network from BT

JOIN THE CLUB NETWARE

The true meaning of life, happily, is procreation. But finding the perfect mate – or a willing, imperfect one for that matter – has never been easy. Unless you decide to use the Internet, the electronic matchmaking service for a new millennium.

By STEVE OWEN

FIND LOVE ON THE NET

Put your love-life at the mercy of the digital match-makers, over the magic Internet:
www.matchmaker.com
www.love.co.uk
www.singles.com
www.playmates.com

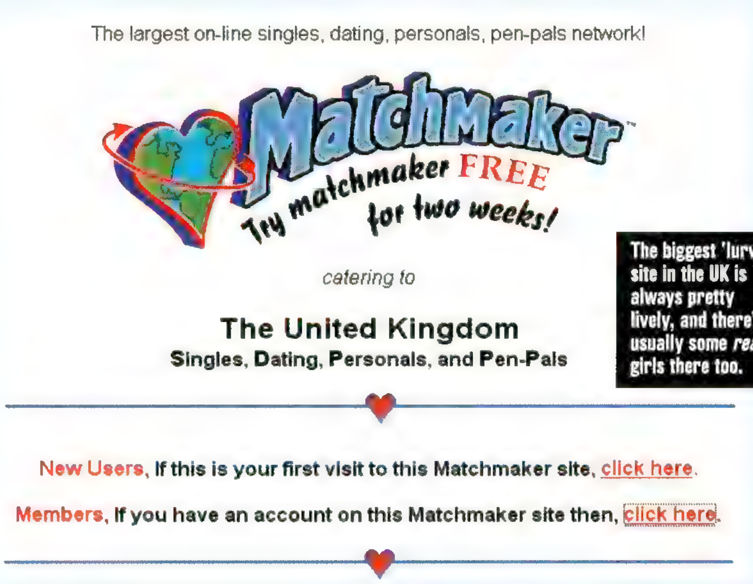
For some 'adult' (read mucky or just not very good) games:
www.erotic-games.com
www.dirtymind.com

Send missives of love with these sites:
www.messagemates.com
www.123greetings.com
www.drkoop.com

YOU can't play games all your life. One day you are going to wake up lonely with a massive ache for action in your groin. Don't worry. That's normal. But being single, despite having overwhelming plus points that invariably outnumber those on the minus side, is not a particularly nice or rewarding way to live in the long term.

Think about when you've got flu and you want someone to make you a hot toddy. There's no-one there. Think about when you want to go to the cinema, and all of your friends have taken their other halves to see it already. There's no-one there.

Think about when you get that groin ache we mentioned, and there's no-one there. Although that probably means that you can get the ache relieved in a couple of minutes and get back to more important things – like a bit more *Half-Life*.



The largest on-line singles, dating, personals, pen-pals network!

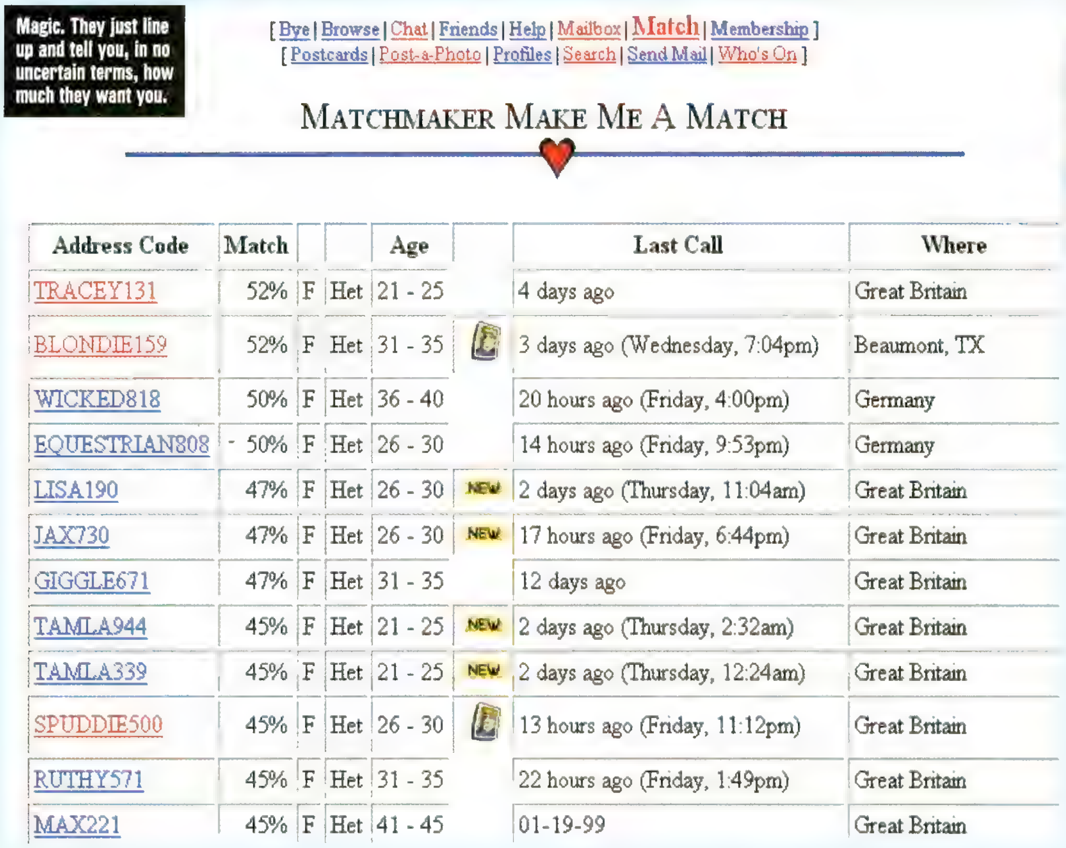
catering to

The United Kingdom
Singles, Dating, Personals, and Pen-Pals

New Users, If this is your first visit to this Matchmaker site, click here.

Members, If you have an account on this Matchmaker site then, click here.

The biggest 'lurve' site in the UK is always pretty lively, and there's usually some *real* girls there too.

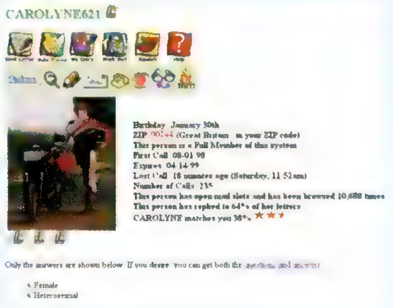


[Bye | Browse | Chat | Friends | Help | Mailbox | Match | Membership]
[Postcards | Post-a-Photo | Profiles | Search | Send Mail | Who's On]

MATCHMAKER MAKE ME A MATCH

Address Code	Match			Age		Last Call	Where
TRACEY131	52%	F	Het	21 - 25		4 days ago	Great Britain
BLONDIE159	52%	F	Het	31 - 35		3 days ago (Wednesday, 7:04pm)	Beaumont, TX
WICKED818	50%	F	Het	36 - 40		20 hours ago (Friday, 4:00pm)	Germany
EQUESTRIAN808	50%	F	Het	26 - 30		14 hours ago (Friday, 9:53pm)	Germany
LISA190	47%	F	Het	26 - 30	NEW	2 days ago (Thursday, 11:04am)	Great Britain
JAX730	47%	F	Het	26 - 30	NEW	17 hours ago (Friday, 6:44pm)	Great Britain
GIGGLE671	47%	F	Het	31 - 35		12 days ago	Great Britain
TAMLA944	45%	F	Het	21 - 25	NEW	2 days ago (Thursday, 2:32am)	Great Britain
TAMLA339	45%	F	Het	21 - 25	NEW	2 days ago (Thursday, 12:24am)	Great Britain
SPUDDIE500	45%	F	Het	26 - 30		13 hours ago (Friday, 11:12pm)	Great Britain
RUTHY571	45%	F	Het	31 - 35		22 hours ago (Friday, 1:49pm)	Great Britain
MAX221	45%	F	Het	41 - 45		01-19-99	Great Britain

Magic. They just line up and tell you, in no uncertain terms, how much they want you.



CAROLYNE621

Birthday January 30th
ZIP [illegible] (Great Britain in your ZIP code)
This person is a Full Member of this system
First Call 08-01-98
Expires 04-14-99
Last Call 18 minutes ago (Saturday, 11:51am)
Number of Calls 235
This person has open mail slots and has been browsed 10,688 times
This person has replied to 64% of her letters
CAROLYNE matches you 38% ★★

Only the answers are shown below. If you desire, you can get both the questions and answers

- Female
- Heterosexual

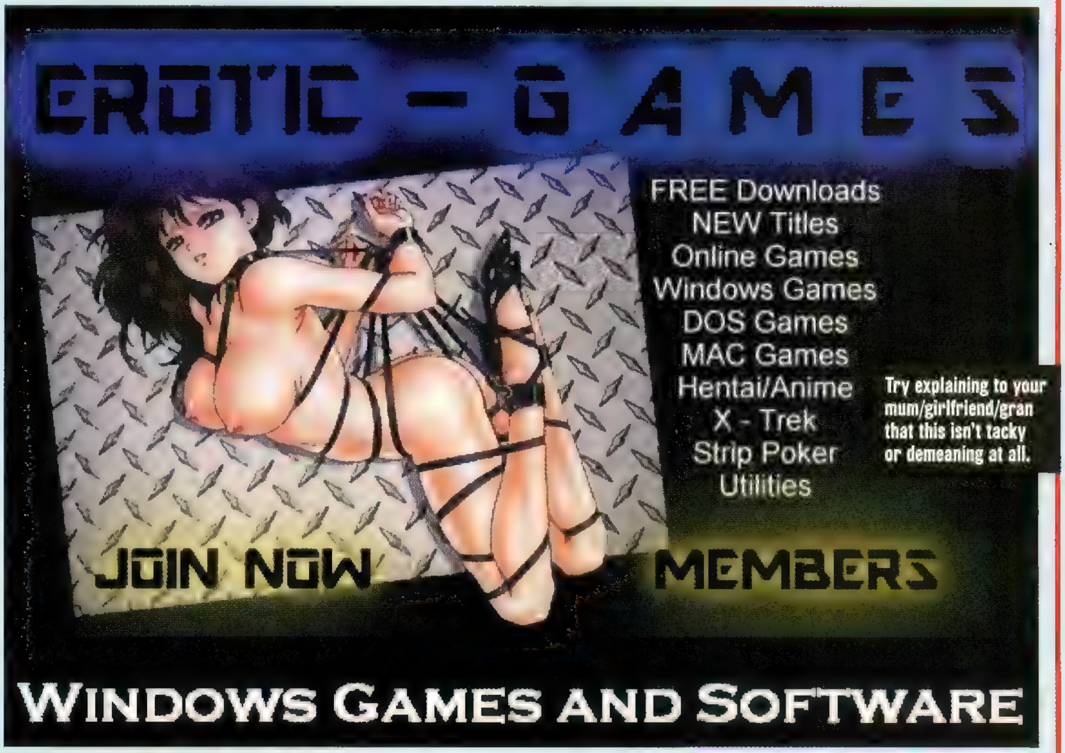
But there's no denying that single plus lonely equals danger. I should know. University life was easy. They just threw themselves at you. You hardly had to walk into the bar to walk back out with someone attractive and up for it. Working life, on the other hand, tends to mean two very important things which are key to this issue.

First, you're now a bit older, and everyone your age is either married, engaged or in 'a long term relationship'. While it's frustrating to the point of great annoyance that people in the 20th Century still seem to think that they will be left on the shelf if they haven't got married by the age of 25, that's just the way it is, and no amount

MUCKY GAMES

PLAYING AT LOVE

Fed up with ordinary games? Try something a bit more fruity...



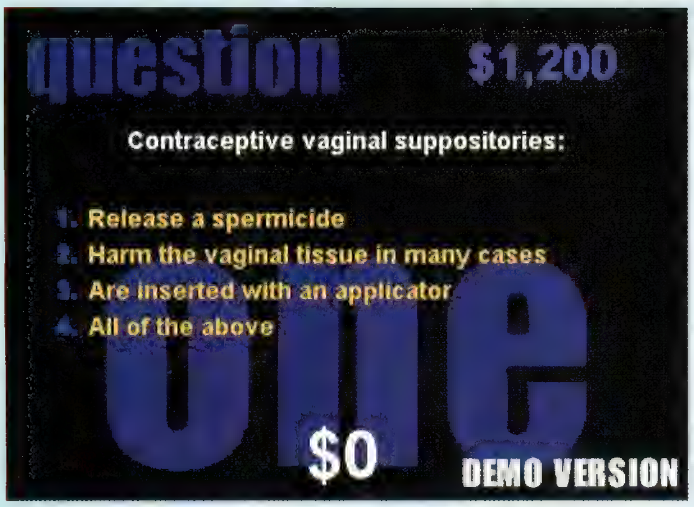
Try explaining to your mum/girlfriend/gran that this isn't tacky or demeaning at all.

Of course, this is a games magazine, and to justify this month's Netware content we have to create the most tenuous of tie-ins. Fortunately, on an Internet stuffed to the gills with single people (for obvious reasons, generally), there are also a number of, ahem, Adult Games.

While these aren't necessarily 'offensive', they do range from 'crude' to 'burn your eyes for being party to such filth'. And like everything love-related on the Internet, the majority of them cost you money and aren't worth even unbuttoning your jeans for.

One of the first places ready to accept your $9.95 a month for unlimited digital titillation downloads is *http://www.erotic-games.com*, a haven of interactive naughtiness. Likewise *http://www.dirtymind.com*, priced at the same craaaazy level.

And what do you get for your money? There's a tedious *Tetris* variant using naked bodies (although someone's bound to have e-mailed this joyous thing to you by now).



Contraceptive vaginal suppositories:

1. Release a spermicide
2. Harm the vaginal tissue in many cases
3. Are inserted with an applicator
4. All of the above

There's also a slight variation on Monopoly written in 1986 and filled with racist and sexist jokes. Oh, and some screensavers of various models, generally undressing or posing, and probably available elsewhere on the Internet for free.

Best left alone then. But one game we couldn't resist playing was the Love Test at *www.dirtymind.com/games/lovetest.html*. It promises to let you know whether you are compatible with a partner, just from your name. Clearly one would imagine that it is based on some astrological equation to do with numbers of letters in each name, but a random selection of three nomenclatures brought three scores over 95%. Top of my 'must have' list appears to be Kenneth Clarke, while, disappointingly, a girl I really fancy only just scraped in at 96%. Still, I do live near his favourite curry-house, so I've got a chance.

LOVE TESTER
Your Test Results

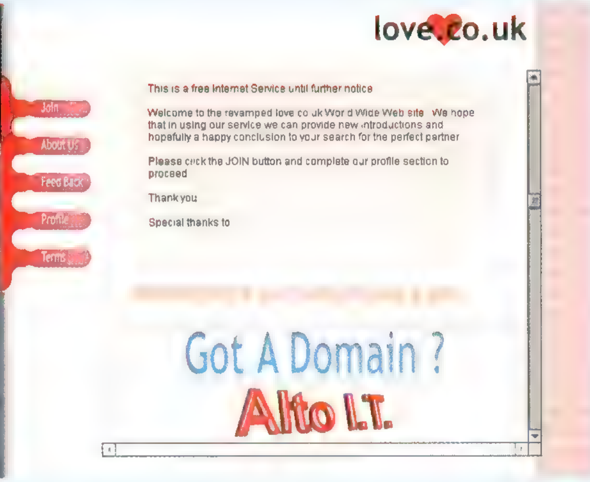
of grumbling into a pint is going to change that.

Secondly, you're meeting fewer and fewer people. There were 5,000 single, reasonably attractive people at college. There are two at work, and both are a bit ropey and have probably shagged your boss. What I'm saying is that, as you get older, your normal, everyday life is going to introduce you to fewer and fewer people (your only decent chance being at the office Christmas party), and no matter how much you beg, you probably won't get to go back out with your ex.

So, what has brought out the cupid in me, the *need* to bring you to love? Well, as I write this it's St Valentine's Day tomorrow, a day that always fills me with dread. It's well known that Valentine is the patron saint of the eternal masturbator, and I know that it's just a marketing ploy to buy flowers and cards and restaurant meals, but we're under so much pressure. More so than Mother's Day, even.

And while this isn't particularly ideal for you, reading this in March, it does mean that I was able to find loads of relevant sites. And look on the bright side; when you go hunting for a mate, they'll be ready for you. After all, either no-one's picked them up even though it was Valentine's Day or they've already been dumped. Sure candidates for some bedroom action.

The pinnacle of romance, encapsulated in *love.co.uk's* tenuous adverts.



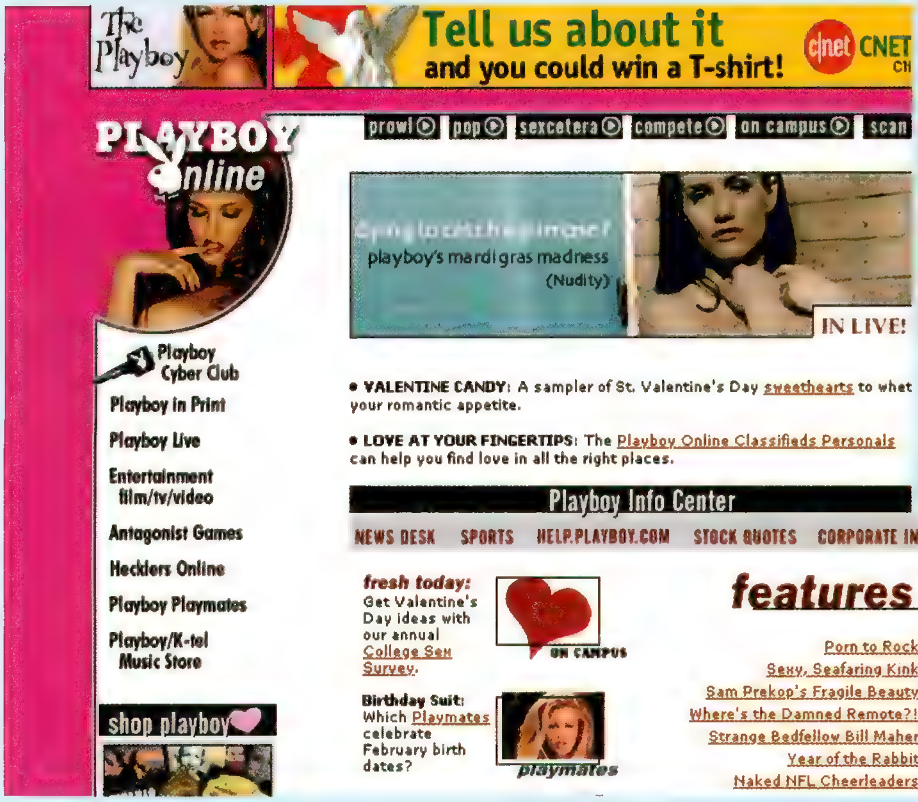
This is a free Internet Service until further notice

Welcome to the revamped love.co.uk World Wide Web site. We hope that in using our service we can provide new introductions and hopefully a happy conclusion to your search for the perfect partner

Please click the JOIN button and complete our profile section to proceed

Thank you

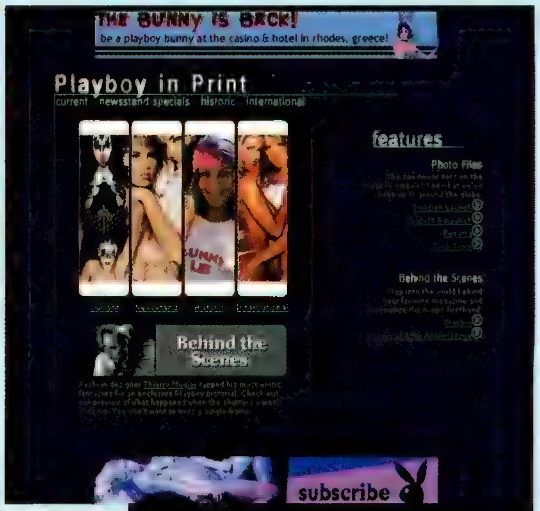
Special thanks to


The Playboy
Tell us about it and you could win a T-shirt!
cnet CNET
PLAYBOY Online
prowl
pop
sexcetera
compete
on campus
scan
playboy's mardi gras madness (Nudity)
IN LIVE!
Playboy Cyber Club
Playboy in Print
Playboy Live
Entertainment film/tv/video
Antagonist Games
Hecklers Online
Playboy Playmates
Playboy/K-tel Music Store
shop playboy
Playboy Info Center
NEWS DESK
SPORTS
HELP.PLAYBOY.COM
STOCK QUOTES
CORPORATE INFO
ON CAMPUS
playmates
features
Porn to Rock
Sexy, Seafaring Kink
Sam Prekop's Fragile Beauty
Where's the Damned Remote?!
Strange Bedfellow Bill Maher
Year of the Rabbit
Naked NFL Cheerleaders

- **VALENTINE CANDY:** A sampler of St. Valentine's Day sweethearts to whet your romantic appetite.
- **LOVE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS:** The Playboy Online Classifieds Personals can help you find love in all the right places.

fresh today: Get Valentine's Day ideas with our annual College Sex Survey.

Birthday Suit: Which Playmates celebrate February birth dates?


THE BUNNY IS BACK!
be a playboy bunny at the casino & hotel in rhodes, greece!
Playboy in Print
current
newsstand specials
historic
international
features
Photo Files
Behind the Scenes
subscribe

Good old Hugh Hefner. A man whose magazines influenced many of us in our teenage years.

Singles networks are, naturally, the standard prowling grounds for the lovelorn, lonely, or just plain flirty, and there's nowhere more popular in the UK than Matchmaker. It's an international service, although you can narrow down your hunt, to *http://www.london.matchmaker.com* for instance.

For the sake of research, naturally, I joined for my free two week period. Purely out of interest and dedication to my work I checked the site hourly for the fortnight and was delighted to see that there was usually at least 50 people up for a live chat there and then, with nearly 150,000 other members, at least a third of which were ladies (my preferred sex, although I shall make no assumptions for our readers, and neither does Matchmaker).

After a lengthy virtual form process over many pages that invites you to wax lyrical about yourself, I was able to do a search for my perfect partner. I was delighted to find, immediately, that there was one person who fitted my needs and desires precisely, and that person was me. I was 100% in tune with myself, and I agreed with me on drugs, drinking and sex on the first date.

But these things are never easy at first, which was why I was happy to lower my sights a little. And concentrate only on women. Sure enough, some 25 girls were found to be living in London and the surrounding area, and matching my personality traits "35% to 55%" of the time. The low figure was a little worrying, until I realised that there were some questions that I really didn't give a damn about, such as "perfect holiday" and "what would you do if you won the lottery". Sure enough, most of them fitted my important, nay, vital criteria:

Female
Heterosexual
Looking for love
Aged 18-30 (well, I'm not fussy)
Bumps and holes in the right places (this last one wasn't included in the original questionnaire, but it was the first question I asked)

Altogether I found it not only rather exciting – like going to the opening night disco during my Freshers' Week – but blissfully easy. Easier than the singles night at Asda, that's for sure. Naturally I still haven't met the right girl, but that's more to do with me being a selfish, cantankerous

BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

OUT OF DATE ALREADY

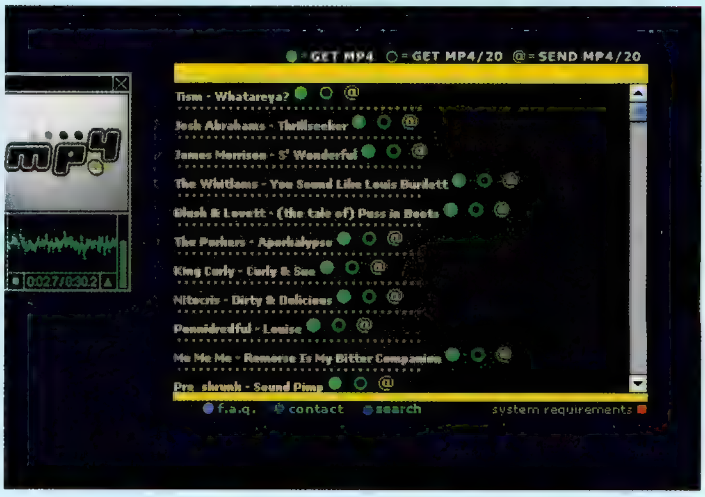
Typical. We spend ages reporting on MP3, only to find it's heading for retirement.

PUBLIC ENEMY
SWINDLERS LUST
multi-play sequencing
mp4
hear it NOW!
f.a.q.
contact

This part isn't in the least bit connected to love or sex, but rather is an addendum to last issue's Netware. So what's the big deal? Well, it seems as if the computer music system MP3 has already been superseded.

Launched in February, MP4 is the new system, providing better sound quality and smaller file sizes. A three-minute song comes in at a little under 2.5Mb, which is about two thirds the size of the MP3 version and one sixteenth that of a WAV file. What's more, the file includes its own playback software, unlimited text streaming (for lyrics or information), a digital watermark to protect copyright and hyperlinks within the player to the band's or publisher's Web sites.

The technology is still very new, with only a few songs available at *mp4.globalmusic.com*, but this includes the support of Public Enemy, whose new song, Swindler's Lust, is available as MP4, but won't be released on CD until later in the year.


mp4
0027/0302
● = GET MP4 ○ = GET MP4/20 @ = SEND MP4/20
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contact
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system requirements

Tism - Whatareya? ● ○ @
Josh Abrahams - Thrillseeker ● ○ @
James Morrison - S' Wonderful ● ○ @
The Whitlams - You Sound Like Louis Burdett ● ○ @
Glash & Lovett - (the tale of) Puss in Boots ● ○ @
The Porkers - Aporkalypse ● ○ @
King Curly - Curly & Sue ● ○ @
Nitocris - Dirty & Delicious ● ○ @
Pennidreadful - Louise ● ○ @
Me Me Me - Remorse Is My Bitter Companion ● ○ @
Pre shrunk - Sound Pimp ● ○ @

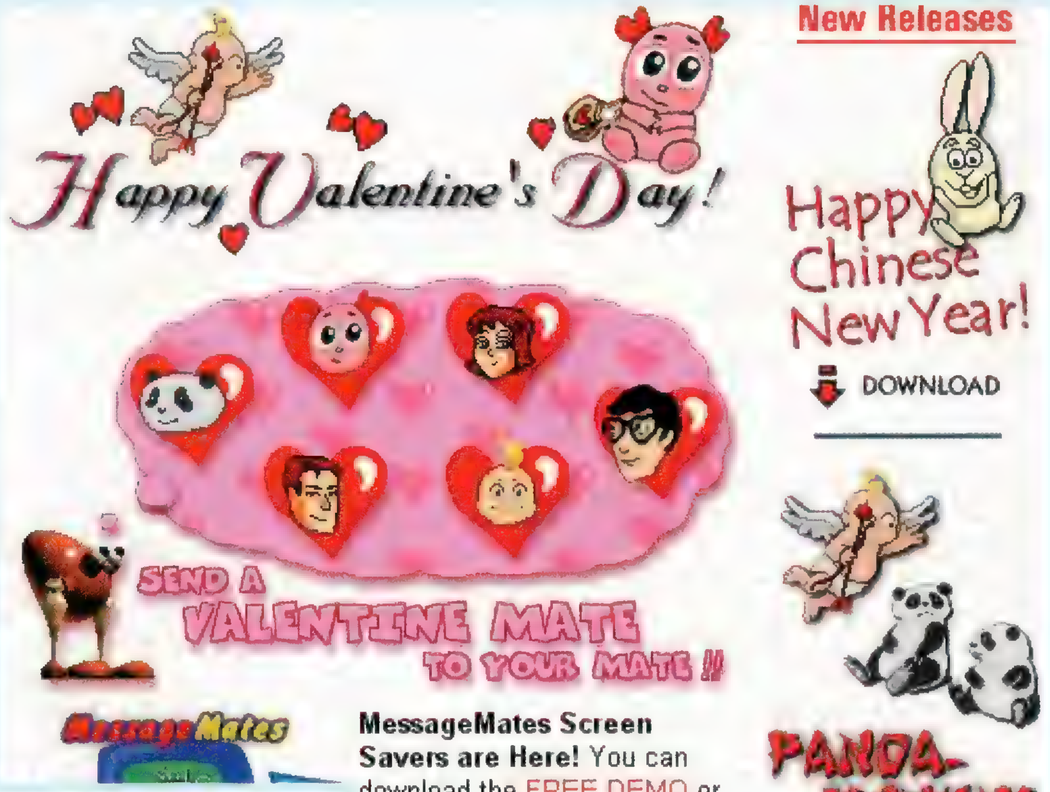
LOVE-LETTERS

GET THE MESSAGE

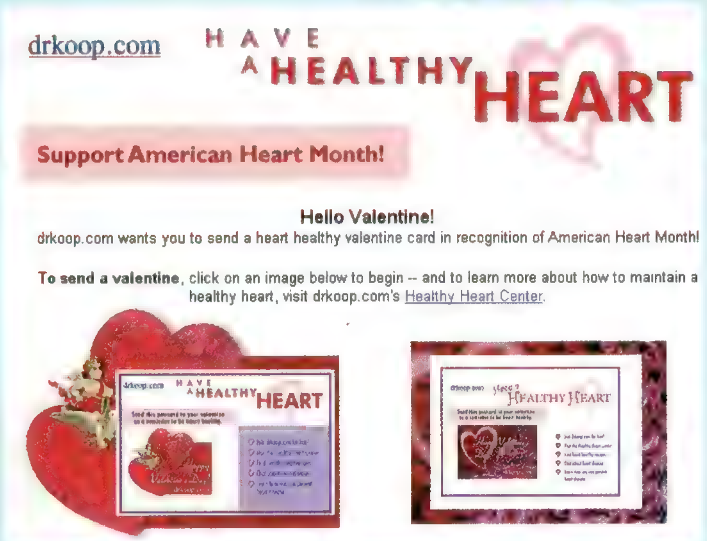
Be my Valentine…

Perhaps you don't need to meet anyone new. Perhaps you know exactly who you want to do bedroom press-ups with already, but just haven't got the heart (read 'guts') to ask them out. Well, that's what e-mail is for. Web sites can now send anonymous e-mails for you if you prefer, and you don't just have to send plain, boring old messages, either.

There's a whole bunch of Web sites out there that are desperate to send epistles of love for you. Rather popular with people in the second week of February, if my bulging inbox is anything to go by (he said smugly), is Message Mates at *http://www.messagemates.com.* A host of little animated greetings can be downloaded, customised and then attached to an e-mail, including suitably suggestive stripping women, 'satirical' takes on the main news of the year, or perhaps just a friendly little greeting to a close friend.



MessageMates Screen Savers are Here! You can download the FREE DEMO or check out the Screen Saver Information Page for the Full Version!



Support American Heart Month!

Hello Valentine!

drkoop.com wants you to send a heart healthy valentine card in recognition of American Heart Month!

To send a valentine, click on an image below to begin -- and to learn more about how to maintain a healthy heart, visit drkoop.com's Healthy Heart Center.

Trust those pesky Americans to spoil our fun. Pass the pork scratchings, love.

The slightly more traditional digital postcard can be sent from, among other sites, *http://www.123greetings.com.* Pick the graphic design, write a message, and the site sends an anonymous e-mail for you, letting your love-target know that there is a postcard for them at a special Web address that they can go to and pick up themselves.

Finally, if you look hard enough, there are always some deadly serious Americans there to take the romance straight out of your amorous gesture. We were particularly amused by the cheery fellows at *http://www.drkoop.com,* where you could send a Valentine's Day 'Healthy Heart' card, reminding us all that, while your heart may beat faster when you're in the throes of love, one day it will stop beating altogether. That's just beautiful, man.

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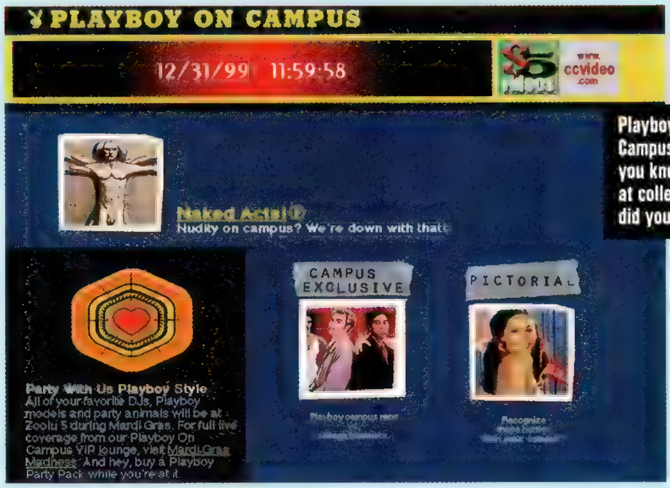
pig than a genuine lack of potential on the Internet.

Naturally, while Matchmaker may be the largest, there are plenty of other meeting points on the Internet, including *http://www.love.co.uk* (nothing to do with the Channel 4 series), *http://www.singles.com*, and, with added fringe benefits, *http://www.playmates.com* (which includes the excellent article 'Look Before You Swallow').

If you still can't find a potential partner, and have scoured the search sites at Yahoo and Lycos for alternative sharking territory, then it may be that you really are in trouble. I would recommend joining a local night class. Massage Technique for Beginners might work particularly well if you like women that are good with their hands and fancy lots of free massages, although my experience is that a roomful of women are likely to get suspicious when one bloke joins their lady gang and is smelly and furtive enough to suggest that he's single.

But if you do bag a potential squeeze and you need to know how to really impress her, may I recommend that you take the advice proffered by my favourite advert, discovered while researching this article:

"Remind them of your love 365 days of the year… with a personalised number plate."



Naked Acts!
Nudity on campus? We're down with that!

Party With Us Playboy Style
All of your favorite DJs, Playboy models and party animals will be at Zoolu's during Mardi Gras. For full live coverage from our Playboy On Campus VIP lounge, visit Mardi Gras Madness. And hey, buy a Playboy Party Pack while you're at it.

Playboy on Campus? so you knew me at college, did you?

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF QUAKE*

*And Quake II

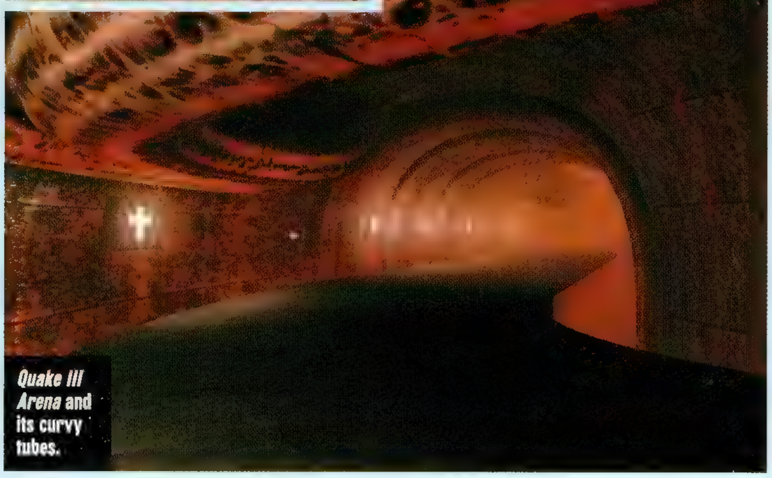
It just gets better. Or does it?

By ALEXANDER STORCH

THE on-line community in the UK is expanding all the time, which is excellent news. Currently the major players in the UK computing industry are still somewhat shy in supporting on-line gaming. In the USA on-line gaming is massive, obviously helped considerably by the fact that most people (if not all) have free local calls – something we aren't going to see over here for a few years yet. Also, many individuals, leagues and clans across the pond have sponsorship of some form or another and there are an awe-inspiring selection of servers to choose from.

The wonderful railgun. But utterly ineffectual in this case.

The fact is that anyone in the UK who runs GameSpy may see many hundreds of players playing *Quake II* at the same time, which will bring a smile to your face if you're looking for some on-line action but in reality a few hundred or even a few thousand games is not enough to bring the 'big boys' round asking what they can do for us. We really need a lot more quality games servers; at the moment the bulk of the top servers are brought to us by people like BarrysWorld, Skirmish, UKPGL, CiX, and some ISPs. Barrysworld *(www.barrysworld.com)* is the UK's biggest games server provider and has the backing of a big company, but it is run totally voluntarily by a team of dedicated individuals who also run and maintain an excellent gaming Web site.



Quake III Arena and its curvy tubes.

Apart from the occasional glitch while playing *Quake II* on-line, when the entire UK network seems to be suffering from asthma, the system seems to cope, but only just. What you, as a dedicated Quaker or any other on-line games enthusiast, need to do is make your voice heard. There are literally hundreds of Internet Service Providers out there that have the hardware and the means of setting up some *Quake* and *Quake II* servers, so e-mail them and ask (or demand) that they do something for you. Because if you, like me, initially got on the Net to play games, you deserve the best you can get. After all, you are paying for it.

MY CONNECTION'S BETTER THAN YOURS!

The other factor that most gamers still strive for is a good connection. BT's 'Home Highway' has taken off in a huge way; it's far from perfect, but for most of us it's the best available at the moment. The average connection speed for a modem can vary from as

QUAKE DOWNLOADS

ESSENTIALS

GameSpy:
This is THE most essential program for your on-line Quaking.
Home page:
http://www.gamespy.com/
Download here:
http://www.gamespy.com/download/dl/dl.asp?gamespy/gamespyinstaller205.exe

Barrysworld:
http://www.barrysworld.com/news/
The UK's number one *Quake* and *Quake II* server provider. The site features up-to-the-minute Quaking news (and other games too). Excellent guest columnists and wide selection of files. This site also hosts numerous *Quake/II* related sites.

Quake II:
http://www.quake2.co.uk
A very informative *Quake II* site with news, files and a long list of hosted clans.

Skirmish:
http://www.skirmishhq.co.uk/
The home site of the TSC clan but also filled to bursting point with news and a particularly long list of different mods.

The UNR Jump Centre:
http://www.planetquake.com/jumps/
An in-depth guide to all the *Quake II* deathmatch maps, and clear instructions on how to perform over 150 crucial and life-saving jumps with demonstration demos. You think you know everything about the deathmatch maps? Be prepared for some surprises!

The Dead Alfs home page:
http://www.quake2.co.uk/deadalfs
The Derek and Clive-inspired *Quake II* and General Gaming Site. Great reviews of recent games, hilarious interviews with prominent members of the UK *Quake II* scene. Very informative and great fun.

3Dfx homepage:
http://europe.3dfx.com/europe.html
Always ensure you have the most up-to-date driver for your 3Dfx card. This site has links to all the major graphics card companies.

Three Fingers homepage:
http://www.ve3d.net/3Fingers/
Essential reading that explains all about your configuration file in detail and also provides information to speed up *Quake II* on line.

GETTING CONNECTED

SPEED IS EVERYTHING

BT claim, "It's good to talk." Of course it is, but it's even more fun to blow your mate's arms and legs off with a trusty hand grenade. And to do that on a regular basis we need the best connection we can get.

Finding a reliable ISP can be tricky and their performance does fluctuate; some ISPs offer better connections to the US, and others are better in making sure our connections are smooth enough to give our European chums a good kicking. At the end of the day, the most important connection you need is the one to your favourite servers, and only you can decide who offers the best service for that.

Depending on where you are geographically makes a difference too; trying some local ISPs is definitely worth a go. Ideally you need to be as close to the 'backbone' as possible. So your data, in the form of a high tensile steel nail in this instance, can find its way through the network and ultimately to your opponent's PC and rip his legs clean off. It's very easy to blame poor connections on the information Super Highway, but you must make sure your system is configured for optimum performance too.

① SETTING UP YOUR MODEM

In a perfect world, of course, Windows 95 would do all this for you. In reality, you frequently have to install it yourself. Make sure all the plugs are firmly in their correct slots and also that your modem is plugged into the phone socket. Have the CD or floppy disk that came with your modem at hand. Open up 'My Computer' from your desktop and select 'Add New Hardware'.

Click 'Next', but don't let Windows 95 look for your modem. Instead, click on 'No' and pick the modem icon from the list. Again, don't allow Windows 95 to search for your modem, as it can locate something completely different. Instead, check the tick box that enables you to pick the modem yourself. Insert your floppy disk or CD, click on 'Have Disk', type the correct drive letter and, if you have a choice, select the appropriate modem, then click 'Finish'. Installation is now complete.

② CONNECTING TO AN ISP

Having decided which ISP to subscribe to, you should now find yourself clutching yet another CD.

Pop it in the CD tray and follow the instructions to the letter. Different ISPs use very different set-up procedures, so it's impossible to walk you through them all here. Be prepared to make a call to the ISP's help-line if you encounter problems.

The Best Way To Get In The Game!
gamespy

③ SOFTWARE

To make your Quaking experience considerably more pleasurable, your first port of call should be *http://www.gamespy.com*. Here, you can download the most recent version of GameSpy. The first time you use GameSpy you'll need to click to 'Update All Sources', which will give you a frighteningly long list of *Quake* servers worldwide. A quick read of the excellent help files will show you how to fine-tune your GameSpy, depending on whether you want to play *Quake* or *Quake II*. For *Quake* players another essential download is QuakeWorld, available from *http://www.idsoftware.com/quakeworld/index.html* QuakeWorld runs in harmony with GameSpy and provides a host of extra commands for your on-line Quaking, but – more importantly – it actually helps to improve the quality of your game.

Quake II users will need a 'patch' to update their original copy of the game to the most recent available, which is currently version 3.20. Go to the 'files section' at *http://clans.quake2.co.uk/*

④ WHEN CAN I KILL SOMEONE?

Right now! If you've set everything up properly, just connect to your ISP, run GameSpy and join a game of your choice.

⑤ MORE GOODIES

Both GameSpy and QuakeWorld are extremely user-friendly, but they do make the assumption that you have at least a basic knowledge of computing. GameSpy should be fine-tuned to your requirements – so swallow your pride and have an in-depth read of the excellent help files.

QUAKE DOWNLOADS

The UKCCL Web site:
http://www.ukccl.co.uk
The UK's biggest clan deathmatch league with over 100 clans participating. Also features a one-on-one league and a free for all (FFA) league.
The UK Lanparty Web site:
http://www.lanparty.co.uk
Another excellent site featuring leagues for CTF, one-on-one, clan deathmatch and more.

QUAKE II BOTS

Oakbot Bot:
http://www.quake2.com/oak/
Eraser Bot:
http://www.frag.com/cgi-bin/dl.cgi?impact/Eraser101.zip
Ice Bot:
http://www.planetquake.com/ice/
CR Bot:
http://www.planetquake.com/crbot/

MODS

Rocket Arena for *Quake II*:
http://asp.planetquake.com/dl/dl.asp?servers/arena/ra2211.exe
Jailbreak for *Quake II*:
ftp://ftp.thepeel.com/pub/jailbreak/jb20cl.zip
ftp.totally3d.com
CTF for *Quake II*:
sunsite.doc.ic.ac.uk

low as 120ms (if you are very lucky) up to 250ms and beyond, although realistically anything beyond 300ms is not very playable. Currently by far the best modems for Internet gaming have proved to be the offerings from Pace, with many players claiming up to as much as 60ms gain in ping times over other 'well known' brands.

The jury is still very much out as to whether to upgrade to v90 or stick with K56. I have heard many different tales: some claim to have amazingly good pings with v90 and a perfectly stable connection, while others agree with the pleasing ping times but vehemently disagree with the stability. Only you can decide whether it's worth having a steady ping of 150-180 with little or no packet loss or having pings as low as 120 but with the appearance of a little icon in the top left-hand corner of your screen called a 'phone jack', accompanied by the dreaded 'ping of death' (999), which has been known to induce a now recognised psychiatric disorder called 'phone jack frenzy'. A bout of 'PJF', as it is commonly referred to, can leave a trail of broken mice and keyboards and, in serious cases, a whole host of broken household objects from crockery to patio furniture. Those lucky enough to have ISDN or an even better connection won't know what PJF is unless, of course, they cut their Quaking teeth on a modem, and some have been known to taunt us less fortunate modemers with provocative remarks like "What's a phone jack?" or "Oh dear, my ping went up to 90 just then." The only sadly uncontrollable, in-built defence

⇨

It was very cold in Q2DM4.

QUAKE II SERVERS

Simply add the following IP addresses to GameSpy or to the 'addresses' section of your *Quake II* multi-player set-up screen.

DEATHMATCH

194.88.93.10:27810 BarrysWorld
195.8.69.76:27910 ClaraNET
194.88.93.59:27910 MINOS
195.64.68.51:27910 CQC
194.42.225.242:27910 Netcom UK
193.130.85.70:27910 Reapers Palace
194.153.0.120:27910 Go_To_New_server
195.102.240.249:27910 Alchemy
194.153.1.50:27910 CIX UK

CTF

194.88.93.11:27810 BarrysWorld
194.153.1.50:27920 CIX UK
195.8.69.76:27911 ClaraNET

CTC

194.88.93.10:27880 BWorld
195.8.69.78:27910 ClaraNET

CHAOS

194.88.93.13:27920 BWorld

RA SERVERS

194.88.93.21:27840 BWorld
195.8.69.76:27912 ClaraNET

➥ mechanism your average modemer has is 'warping', which happens when his (or her) ping goes AWOL and he misses lots of frames. To the observer this looks as if the warper is on steroids as he takes a step, disappears very briefly and then reappears about six feet further along – warpers are bloody hard to hit. This annoys the hell out of LPBs, which is good news for HPBs. What isn't good news is that by its very 'uncontrollable' nature you usually end up lava bathing.

QUAKE III DEBATE

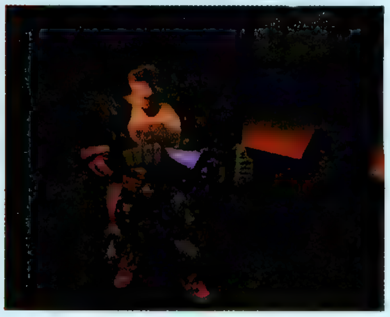
There is a general feeling of uncertainty about *Quake III Arena*. It's widely felt that all the *Quake I* players who shunned *Quake II* will jump wholeheartedly into playing *Arena*. It is also widely accepted that *Quake II* players will not be as loyal as their *Quake I* counterparts and will 'jump ship' as soon as *Arena* is released. To the average gamer things are looking very rosy.

If we assume that *Quake III Arena* will be a mindblowing multi-player experience, and it's a pretty safe bet that it will be, then every Quaking fanatic will have some decision making to do. The casual player or unclanned mercenary will have it easy, by being able to play any of them at will, as you must remember no matter how good it is it won't detract from the fact that *Quake I* and *II* are still awesome games. All the main *Quake* and *Quake II* leagues in the UK are still going strong and have no plans of calling it a day when *Quake III Arena* comes along (at the time of writing). So those clans who are still locked in the continual struggle for promotion to the top can be content that there will still be a league for them in which to contend. The main *Quake II* DM will have just started its sixth season as this magazine is released, and I assure you I will keep the *Quake II* side of things going as long as there is a demand for it.

However, as soon as *Quake III Arena* is released and the opinions of many of the top *Quake II* players in the UK have been gathered, the UKCCL will he holding a huge Quaking competition to accurately gauge the capabilities of the 'new' *Quake III* clans in order to have all the divisions in the new UKCCL *Quake III* league stocked full of similarly skilled clans. The 'new kid on the block' will also address the problems of connectivity head-on to improve gameplay still further. So if you are one of a rare breed who didn't like *Quake* or *Quake II* then you're in for a treat. Having said that, surely such a person deservers to have his hard drive ripped out.

Whatever you think about *Quake, Quake II* or the forthcoming *Quake III Arena*, you can head over to *www.ukccl.co.uk* and have your say on a huge range of issues. Vote for your favourite clan or player, or suggest the direction in which you'd like to see the future of on-line gaming going in the UK.

Never underestimate the power of a spread of hand grenades.



MOD OF THE MONTH

GLOOM

Web site ■
http://www.planetquake com/rxn/gloom/

If you're one of those people who held a pillow over your head or left the room while watching the Marines wandering around the dark tunnels of the ship in Aliens, this mod is not for you.

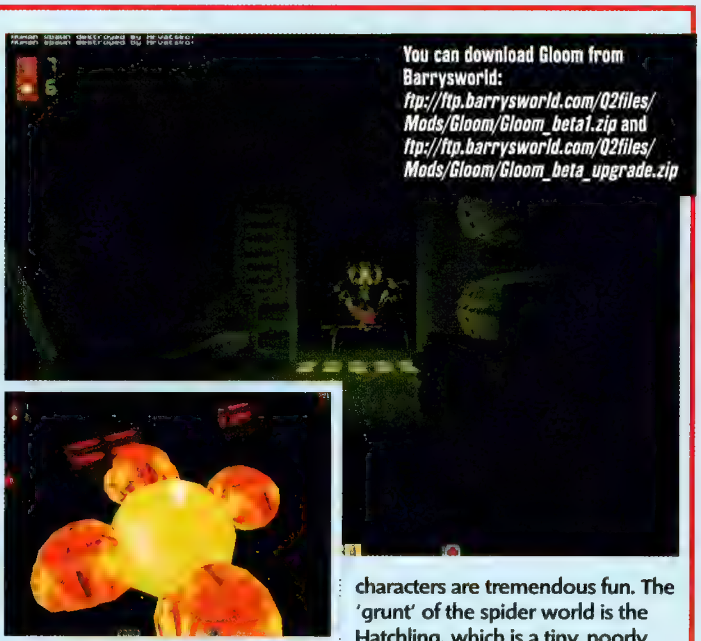
Upon joining a Gloom server you get the option to be a human (Marine) or a spider (yes, a spider). There is a choice of different classes in both human and spider characters, but initially you can only pick one of the first two basic classes. During the game, when you have gained experience in the form of frags, you will be able to pick a better class.

Gloom is essentially a straightforward team-play modification with the main objective being to wipe out the enemies spawn points (teleports) if you are the spiders. If you play as the Marine, you must destroy the enemy's hatcheries, which are disgusting looking groups of eggs. The first team to successfully do this wins the game, as a team that can't 'spawn' new players is doomed.

One of Gloom's many fine attributes is that you never get that feeling of invincibility – no matter how powerful a Marine you are, the enemy can still take you down with a carefully planned attack.

The best thing about Gloom, though, is the unbelievable sense of dread that death awaits you around every corner. One of the most popular maps, Gloom1a, (the maps come with the game) is very dark indeed apart from one corridor, so you will find yourself using the powerful torch to look in the corners for the enemy scum even though this makes you more visible to them. The spider characters are tremendous fun. The 'grunt' of the spider world is the Hatchling, which is a tiny, poorly armoured fast-moving spider capable of taking out a human grunt with one 'bite'. If you play as the Hatchling, stealth is your best friend – sneaking up on the Marines is great fun. The different classes in each team are very evenly matched, with 'engineers' for producing spawn points and extra ammo points for the Marines. You also have out-and-out attack classes and defenders.

Gloom is quite a big download, but for an unrivalled 'fear factor' you won't be disappointed.

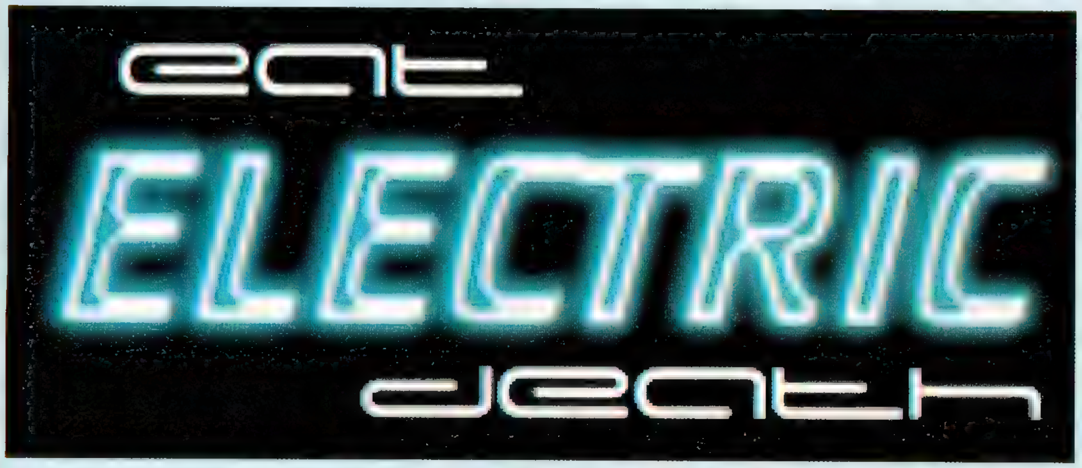


You can download Gloom from Barrysworld:
ftp://ftp.barrysworld.com/Q2files/Mods/Gloom/Gloom_beta1.zip and *ftp://ftp.barrysworld.com/Q2files/Mods/Gloom/Gloom_beta_upgrade.zip*

CLAN OF THE MONTH

EAT ELECTRIC DEATH

Web site ■ http://clans.quake2.co.uk/eed **Clan leader** ■ Slim



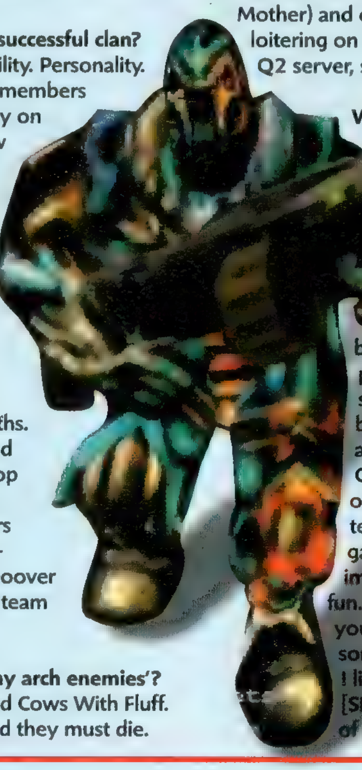
How did you come up with that name?
The clan was formed on the UKGamer mailing list. We're mostly console owners, and we all loved the Jeff Minter classic *Tempest X*. 'Eat Electric Death' is displayed when you annihilate everything on screen with your Superzapper. Like Jules in Pulp Fiction says, it's a pretty cool thing to say to someone just before you put a cap in their ass.

How long ago did you form?
We formed in May 1998.

How many members do you have?
Currently 16.

How old are your members?
We're mostly over 25, and most work with IT/Games in some way.

What makes a successful clan?
Humour. Reliability. Personality. You must have members that you can rely on to actually show up, have a strong appetite for curry, and a love of '70s entertainers.



Who are your best players?
They all have different strengths. Lurker, Billox and Lesbub are all top notch fraggers, yet other players like venusXL, D-Kaveman and Doover are very strong team players.

Do you have any arch enemies'?
Yes. The dreaded Cows With Fluff. They are evil and they must die.

What's your favourite mod?
Battle Communicator so we can laugh at each others' ineptness.

What are your favourite maps?
The clan's fave is Q2DM8 – Warehouse. We also enjoy a great custom map called Fusion – Closed Particle loop.

Can anyone join your clan?
No. We're a very close community of David Essex fans. We only accept new members that can endure our painful induction ceremony that faithfully recreates the one used by the Templar Knights. We believe David would want it that way.

Where do you play?
In our own homes. We also have our own server (Atom Heart Mother) and can often be found loitering on PC Gaming Worlds Q2 server, sorry!

What is the point of being in a clan?
On-line games, especially *Quake*, are great fun in the beginning, but playing on public servers soon becomes repetitive and a bit pointless. Clans are great for organising tactics for team and league games but more importantly are great fun. If you are lucky, you also get to make some genuine friends. I like that.
[SLIM lives on the Isle of Man and hasn't been out of his home village in 22 years.]

What are the clan achievements and disappointments?
We came second overall in the OFFL *Quake* league. We were undefeated in our first two seasons of the UKCCL. Our biggest achievement has been staying together this long! The only disappointment has been David Essex's repeated reluctance to write us an EED Anthem. Unfortunately we'll just have to keep using the A-Team theme until he does.

Who are all the members of the clan then?
Well, I am the boss (Slim). I founded the clan with venusXL, D-Kaveman, BadBitch (really a girl), Koz, Meatball and Doover. The Lurker joined us very early on and is still our star player. We've also got 'lotta' who plays from Sweden, DNM, Lesbub, Billox the quakeadelica champ, Shedir, DanDanger, Scoob and Cavilier.

Can you divulge some of your playing tips?
Use the mouse and humorous binds involving 'Tropical Fruit Bubbalicious' to distract your enemies. We also spread rumours about us being the first all-gay UK clan, which tends to make enemies line up with their backs against the wall.

What other clans do you respect or aspire too ?
This looks like I'm being crawly – but probably AbFab who seem to be about friendship and camaraderie rather than winning at all costs (I'll pay you later Slim-Alex). For skills, it has to be Unreal – unimaginative, I know – but those guys swan around like Ted Danson, and wouldn't we all like to be that cool?

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Shadows of the Empire™

Star Wars Supremacy™

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PC CD ROM

STAR WARS

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A RIVAL FAMILY IMPERILS YOUR LIVELIHOOD. THE EVIL EMPIRE'S PRESENCE IS LOOMING. YOUR ONLY HOPE IS TO JOIN THE REBEL ALLIANCE IN THIS EPIC *STAR WARS* ADVENTURE WHERE ONLY THE TOUGHEST SURVIVE. THE LATEST IN THE UNIVERSALLY ACCLAIMED X-WING SERIES.

ARE YOU WORTHY OF FLYING THE *MILLENNIUM FALCON*?

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ALLIANCE™

PC CD ROM

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www.lucasarts.com www.starwars.com

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THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Over a year on and *Grand Theft Auto* finally makes it onto the service, the initial problems by now ironed out (hopefully), while giant metal blaster *Shogo: Mobile Armour Division* and buggy disappointment *SiN* join the ranks of the other 3D shooters.

If everything goes to plan then *Civilization: Call To Power* should also be available as you read this, but it isn't finished as we write. Fingers crossed then.

Here's the complete list for your records.

RAPID PLAY SERVICE:

Actua Golf 2
Actua Soccer 2
Actua Soccer 3
Age Of Empires
AOE: Rise Of Rome
Armoured Fist 2
Big Red Racing
Blood
Colin McRae Rally

Combat Flight Simulator
Command & Conquer
Comanche 3
Daytona Deluxe
Descent
Descent 2
Doom
Duke Nukem 3D
EF2000
Euro 96

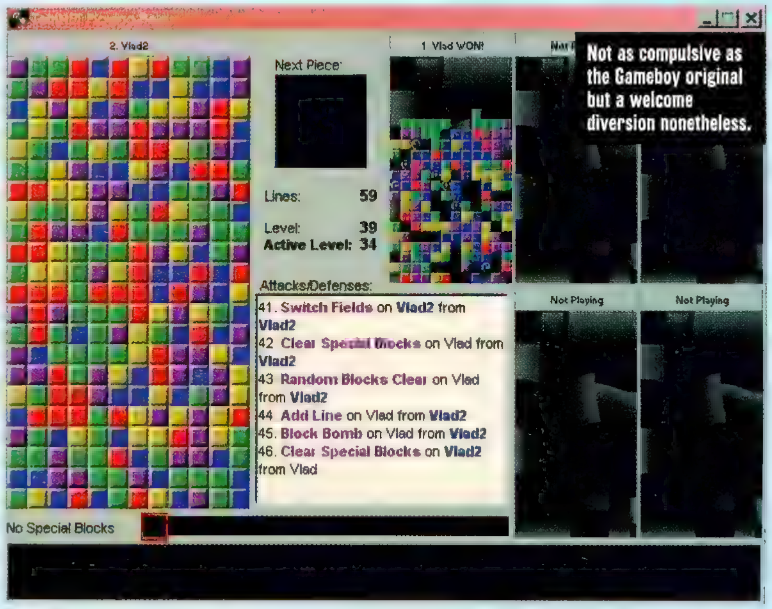
THIS MONTH ON WIREPLAY

Thinking without worrying about your phone bill, more Internet based games, and our *Half-Life* postings; it's all four weeks in the life of PC GAMER.

By STEVE OWEN

TETRINET

StormCat
Price: Free ($10 requested)
From: http://www.gamersextreme.com/strategies/tetrinet/
Players: 1-6



41. Switch Fields on Vlad2 from Vlad2
42 Clear Special Blocks on Vlad from Vlad2
43 Random Blocks Clear on Vlad from Vlad2
44 Add Line on Vlad from Vlad2
45. Block Bomb on Vlad from Vlad2
46. Clear Special Blocks on Vlad2 from Vlad

Not as compulsive as the Gameboy original but a welcome diversion nonetheless.

Tetris is as old as God, but it's also one of the most beautifully crafted games of all time. *TetriNET* is *Tetris* but – get this – multi-player. Up to six players link up (with one acting as server and supplying his IP address to the others – see boxout below) for a teamwork or all-against-each-other game.

Speed counts more than ever before, with traditional multi-player rules sticking your completed lines onto the opposition's, or you can opt for *TetriNET's* own multi-player rules. These offer up a series of special blocks that randomly appear within your level each time you clear a line. Now, if you clear a line containing a special block, it goes into your inventory. You can now use the special block on yourself or an opponent to add new lines, clear blocks, shake the blocks into gaps, nuke the entire screen clear, or shake the blocks up randomly.

Importantly you can also see miniature representations of everyone else's screens, so that you can time your moves and the use of the special blocks.

It's timeless, and this is an interesting twist, but the game doesn't speed up quickly enough, occasionally leading to some slow games. Finding opponents isn't straightforward, relying on familiarity with Internet Relay Chat, but once you've got going *TetriNET* makes for a quick and enjoyable multi-player challenge.

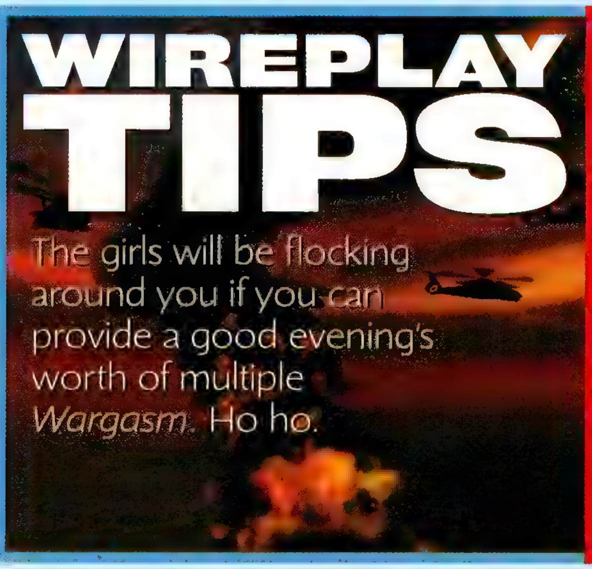
83%

IP ADDRESS

Some games require you to enter the IP address (a unique code for each computer on the Internet) of the server. If you are acting as a server, you need to transmit your IP address to the other gamers. The IP address usually changes each time you connect to the Internet.

You can find out your current IP address by clicking on Start, Run and typing: winipcfg.

WIREPLAY TIPS



The girls will be flocking around you if you can provide a good evening's worth of multiple *Wargasm*. Ho ho.

WARGASM

War has never been so much fun, and it's partly thanks to the stirring music that accompanies *Wargasm's* many battles. It also makes for a popular and shockingly enjoyable multi-player game. We want you to be the best Wireplay *Wargasm*-er, which is why, out of the kindness of our hearts, we present you with these brief but sound gaming tips.

Obviously the strength of any strategy game, even one as action-packed as *Wargasm*, is that each unit has its strengths and weaknesses. Some are obvious, but we've collated some of the more obscure features of the trooper, tank and helicopter so that you are in a better position to decide which is your preferred unit type. Hope it helps.

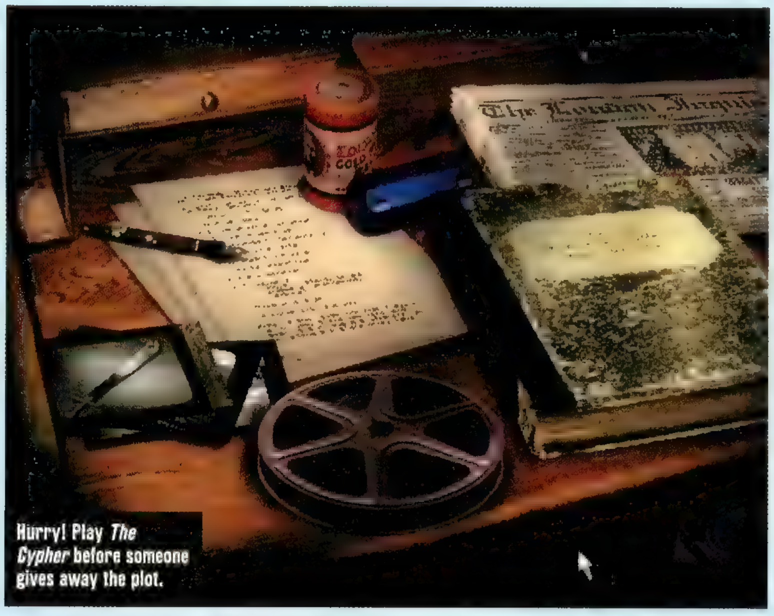
THE TROOPER

He may be small, slow and weak, but in this case size is important. An enemy round has to hit you directly to count as a kill. If he hits the ground next to you, he won't get the point. Sure, you're still dead, but at least their score isn't totting up.

Indeed, you can hide well as the

THE CYPHER

EPG Media
Price: Free
From: http://www.won.net/gamerooms/rpg/cypher/
Players: Unlimited



Hurry! Play *The Cypher* before someone gives away the plot.

There was a preponderance of Interactive CD-ROM style adventures on the Internet a couple of years ago, but – and this is generally a good thing – they seemed to die off pretty rapidly. And yet *The Cypher* has made a comeback this winter. It was, we think, a minor release on CD a couple of years ago, and has decided to have another stab at popularity on the Internet today.

It's an investigative adventure, inasmuch that you aren't exploring several locations but investigating paperwork and video clues instead, in the vapid hope that you can figure out what is going on.

The story is certainly an intriguing one, involving similar murders 1,000 years apart. You can visit a medieval world in 999, Scotland Yard's archives of 1900 and a computer system in 1999 in an attempt to figure out what the hell is going on.

The game has been released episodically, using slightly ropey RealPlayer videos to describe some of the background story, and culminating in a series of surprise twists towards the end. Or so it says here. They haven't published the final chapters as we write this, although they should be available by the time you read this.

Intriguingly a message board chat system means that people from all over the world can chat to work out the outcome, although we would recommend treading with care. Surely someone is going to give the game away with a harmless or malicious post. Nice story, too long downloading.

71%

MONEY

WIREPLAY PRICING

When using Wireplay you can pay by dialling a premium rate line (at 2.5p a minute off peak, 6 pence peak) or by subscribing by credit card, which entitles you to use local call access. The credit card option costs £9.95 a month or £99.50 a year. To join the credit card option simply click on the Wireplay logo in the bottom right of the client program, then choose Setup. The Channel Setup screen is used to select the payment method.

INSTALLATION

Every month we include the Wireplay client software on CD GAMER. You can also order a free CD from Wireplay by calling 0800 800918. The CD includes a multi-player version of DID's excellent *EF2000* flight simulator, a selection of card and board games including *Poker* and *Backgammon*, *Air Attack*, a flight sim that supports over 25 players, and *MUD II*, a massive multi-player role-playing game.

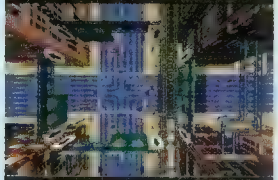
If you can't wait, you can also download the files from Wireplay's Internet site: *www.wireplay.co.uk*.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wireplay hosts at least one competition or game event every night. You can find out the latest plans by visiting *http://www.wireplay.co.uk* and selecting the Wireplanner button, or clicking the calendar icon in the Wireplay client.

THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

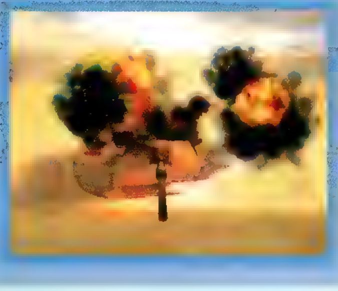
- Extreme Assault
- F-22 ADF
- F-22 Total Air War
- FA-18 Korea
- Final Liberation
- Flight Sim 98
- Formula Karts
- Forsaken
- Fragile Allegiance
- Gettysburg
- G-Nome
- Grand Theft Auto



- Half-Life
- Incubation
- Jedi Knight
- Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith
- Legal Crime
- Monster Truck Madness 2
- Motocross Madness
- MUD II
- NASCAR Racing 2
- Netmech
- Plane Crazy
- Populous: The Beginning
- Red Alert
- Redneck Rampage
- Rumble In The Void
- The Settlers III
- Shadow Warrior
- Shogo: MAD
- Sid Meier's Gettysburg
- Star Wars Supremacy
- Terminal Velocity
- Total Annihilation
- Ultimate Doom
- Uprising
- Virtua Fighter 2
- Virtua Fighter 2 Demo
- Virtual Snooker
- Warcraft II
- Wargasm

trooper, particularly in levels that are foggy. If you crouch, you make your target size even smaller, and thus even harder to spot. Unfortunately you move so slowly when crawling that if anyone does spot you, chances are you are dead.

When hiding or making use of cover avoid the most obvious places. A tank being fired upon is likely to shoot back at a bush if it's the only thing in the immediate vicinity (although hitting the bush is unlikely to count as a direct hit). It's far more beneficial to crouch between the target and the cover, which means that not only will you still be camouflaged, but you are also unlikely to take any damage when your enemy targets the bush instead of you.



The trooper usually benefits from using anti-tank rounds against the helicopters and other troops, where one direct hit is enough to kill the opposition. Tanks, however, tend to be a little tougher, and, ironically, the anti-tank ammo just draws attention to your position. However, if you think that you can get two or three rounds off

⇨

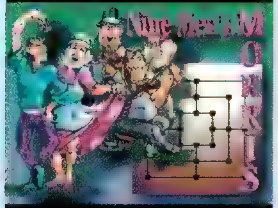
"Ouch."

THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Warhammer Dark Omen

MIND GAMES SERVICE:

- Black Maria
- Cribbage
- Dalmatian Pirates
- Draughts
- Fox & Geese
- Go
- Gomoku
- Hex
- Mancala
- Nap
- Nine Men's Morris



- Poker
- Push & Shove
- Renju
- Reversi
- Wild West
- Wireplay Bridge
- Wireplay Chess

GAME WORLDS SERVICE:

- Air Attack
- Quake
- Quake II
- SiN
- Unreal

You can find Wireplay on the Internet at http://www.wireplay.co.uk or call 0845 757 7577 12 pm – 12 am

LATEST

Here is the news...

EXPRESS RELIEF

The previously United Kingdom was broken up further by *The Settlers III* competition which rocked Wireplay at the end of January. Teams from England, Scotland and Wales battled it out, with Scotland coming tops. The entire country gets to share £200 and an incredibly tacky 18-30 holiday somewhere hot and ruined through overcrowding.

ON THE HEAD, SON

If you stick steadfastly by *Actua Soccer 2* rather than its sequel, be delighted to know that there is now a weekly competition, each Sunday at 6.30pm.

WHILE YOU WAIT

Team Fortress may not be available yet, but that isn't stopping a wealth of *Half-Life* debauchery on Wireplay. There's now a new multi-player add-on that includes extra character models and skins and a new team-play map.

Meanwhile lag can be reduced in this oh-so-lovely game by using the Tweak3D utility found at *www.voodooextreme.com/tweak3d*. It creates an autoexec file for you.

AND NOW AIR ATTACK

"Two World Wars and one World Cup, doo-dah, doo-dah..." No doubt that's what xenophobes were singing at the end of January, but it's something that PC GAMER would never endorse. However, we are delighted to announce that the Brits beat the Germans in the largest ever *Air Attack* team game. Double hoorah!

VROOM

Microsoft's rather enjoyable *Motocross Madness* now has a Wireplay club, with tournaments taking place each Tuesday at 9pm. Tis a good thing.

CROATIA 0 PARAGUAY 0 23 MIN
Wireplay
Wireplay
STRUWAY
DEAN MONROE

Actua Soccer Sunday. 6.30pm weekly on Wireplay.

Tuesday night is *Motocross Madness* night. So now you know.

ARE YOU BEING SERVERED?

There's now four more new *Quake II* servers on Wireplay, including one running the new mods *Qpong* and *Pinball*. Give 'em a go. For us.

YOU WANTED THEM, YOU GOT THEM

Just in case you missed the recent announcement: Wireplay now has *SiN* and *Shogo* servers. Don't say we don't give you what you ask for!

FIRST SETTLERS TOURNEY

'Ashanti' has asked us to remind you all that the first on-line tournament for *The Settlers III* will be on Tuesday 19th January at 7.30pm on Rapid Play Channel. Good luck!

RUMBLE IN THE VOID DOWNLOADS

All the downloads you'll ever need to play VR-1's multi-player monster *Rumble In The Void* are now on the Wireplay game page.

LATEST COLIN MCRAE RALLY NEWS

The latest news from the *Colin McRae Rally* club has just been posted by Chas on the official Wireplay club Web site.

GLASSES AND BUM FLUFF

Wireplay is supporting a campaign to make board game classic chess a recognised sport in the UK. You can sign the petition right now if you care to go on-line.

before being spotted, it still makes sense.

[illegible]

The armour around a tank isn't consistent. The armour at the front is considerably stronger than the thin back and sides. As such, you might prefer to switch to the third-person view when controlling it so that you can more easily see what's around you, and if anyone is firing at the weaker elements of your can.

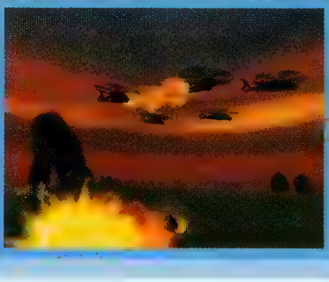
This should also hint to you that you should always be pointing in the direction of the enemy. Except in exceptional circumstances keep the turret pointed forwards and steer the tank rather than the turret. What's more, since the tank is narrower than it is long you also reduce your surface area, making you a harder target to hit.

Use the Sabot or Heat-seeking weaponry against helicopters, and whatever you fancy against troops.

[illegible]

While flexible and fast, the helicopter is a sod to fly, while scoring direct hits and moving at the same time is a challenge that takes some practice.

Because the game doesn't directly support altitude changes through the joystick you are likely to find the game easier with a programmable joystick. Bind the throttle or two of the fire buttons to the A and Z keys to affect altitude and improve the controls.



Your most useful weaponry aboard the helicopter is the seeking Hellfire. Provided you've got some left you are a scary adversary.

Shooting them requires keeping your nose pointed towards the target, although they won't score direct hits if you fly over the target. Using circle-strafe techniques no doubt learnt and perfected in *Quake* you can fly within range of the enemy, and then fly sideways, spinning to keep pointing at the enemy. You can even make use of your rapid turning circle to make sure that the enemy can never quite swivel around quickly enough to target you.

Snipers are best frustrated with constant altitude changes, but look out for the ground.

PLAY TO WIN
NEVER TO LOSE

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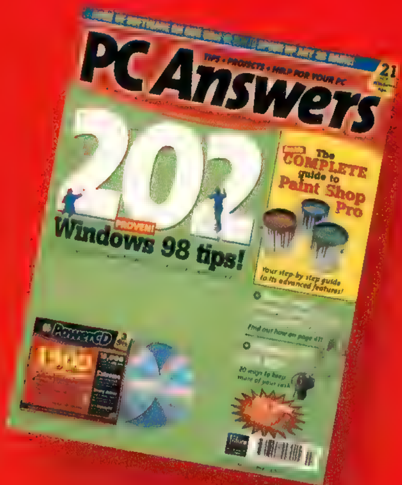
PC Answers
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21
202
PROVEN!
Windows 98 tips!
The COMPLETE guide to Paint Shop Pro
Your step-by step guide to its advanced features!
Find out how on page 41!
20 ways to keep more of your cash
PowerCD

He's Britain's best-selling and best-loved comedy/fantasy author. His Discworld has given birth to 25 best selling books and two, with a third in the pipeline, games. PC GAMER chats to him about the Discworld/CD-ROM Disc relationship.

TERRY PRATCHETT

BY KIERON GILLEN

You've been reported as being a long-time videogame fan, all the way back to the 8-bits and classic isometric adventures. In all your years of playing, what would you say would be your favourite game of all time?
The one that most impressed me, without a shadow of doubt, was the first *Wing Commander*. You look at it now and it's kind of flat, but for those days it was very good. They've improved on it over the years. I played my way through that, and the secret missions and the special operations and *Wing Commander II* and *IV*, then *Privateer 2* and *4*.

There are lots of similar games to *Wing Commander*. Have you ever been tempted to play any of its competitors, like *X-Wing?*
The difficulty I found with the Star Wars games was that they were *too* realistic at times. Half the time you were up against little dots that went (Terry makes a dramatic gesture) Zoing! Let's be honest: *Wing Commander* was really just aerial dogfights with no gravity, with absolutely no relation to how space-fights would operate, like flying *inside* the big ships so you could strafe them from there...

What sort of things have you been playing recently?
I finished *Tomb Raider 3*, then went back and played my way through *Tomb Raider 2* again, just to remind myself what it was like. I like games where you explore... and get to kill things. Before that I finished *Unreal*. To be fair, I have to be a bit careful as I tend to be a bit obsessive about a game. And I have got time, time that maybe I should be doing something else with. If I'm not careful, I can lose an afternoon. I'll just get to the end of the level. Then I'll just get to the end of the game. Then I'll get to the end of the game after that.

Funnily enough, you don't mention adventures anywhere in the list of games. Can you ever imagine *Discworld* being any sort of game apart from an adventure?
Well you can't do a shoot-'em-up because it just won't work! Maybe something closer to *Tomb Raider*... but the point is all the fun in *Discworld* is in seeing the dialogue. I'm not certain you can combine the three-dimensionality of *Tomb Raider* with a dialogue heavy game, which is what it would have to be. There's shit-loads of dialogue in *Discworld Noir*. Masses and masses of dialogue. Dialogue is what the *Discs* are filled with. I think the upper limit on the development of games is how much companies are prepared to invest in a game and how much time people are prepared to invest in a game. It took me 47 hours to get through *Tomb Raider 3*... and even then I didn't get every single secret. Too much longer than that and you start thinking, "Hey... this isn't a game. It's just a penance."

PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON DUDD

So how would you like games developing in the future? What sort of areas would you like to see them pushing in? What do you think's The Future Of Videogames.
The easy answer is multi-player. The thing is, even if you just have a landscape of geometrical shapes, multi-player can be fun because you're up against people who are at least as intelligent as you are. And there the sky is really the limit. It's a bit sad, isn't it, to think of 11 couch potatoes lying there as part of a virtual football team.

***Discworld Noir* seems quite separate to the previous games. They were extremely strongly based on things that happened in the books. *Noir* moves more to create something that's connected to your work, but has a life of its own...**
I guarantee if anyone's read the books reasonably well, they will come across certain situations and say, "Hey! This happened in..." But you got into that situation in a different way. It is a game set in the Discworld universe, and it obeys the rules of the Discworld universe, and some of the things that happen will seem familiar. But a lot of the things that happen will seem familiar to *anyone* that's seen a Noir movie. And everybody has without realising it. If they've seen Bladerunner, that was a homage to Film Noir. Arguably the movie Seven *was* a Film Noir movie. Everybody knows about Humphrey Bogart, even if they haven't seen the Maltese Falcon. They know how the dialogue goes, and the women with the shoulder-pads you can land light aircraft on. And you always know the hero is a

⇨

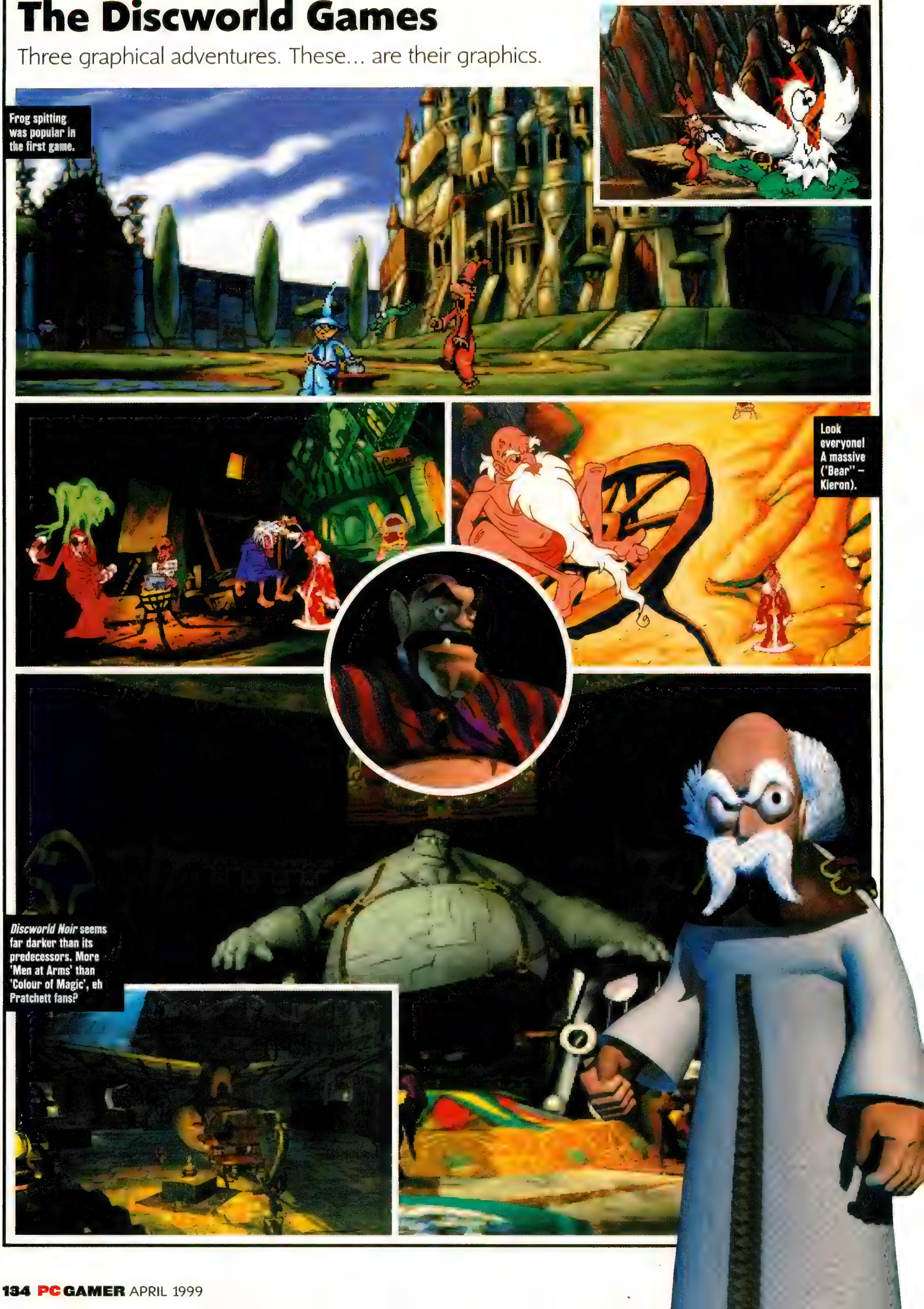
NOT GAMES BIT

What about the new book?

It's 'The Fifth Elephant'. It's not coming out until November. It's got Vimes of the City Watch, but most of the book takes place in Uberwald, which has got werewolves and dwarves and vampires in. It's not really an Ankh-Morpork book *(City where most of the Watch books are set. - Kieron)* And possibly, if it stays until the final draft, the beginnings of the Discworld equivalent of the Internet.

The Discworld Games

Three graphical adventures. These... are their graphics.



Frog spitting was popular in the first game.

Look everyone! A massive ('Bear" – Kieron).

Discworld Noir seems far darker than its predecessors. More 'Men at Arms' than 'Colour of Magic', eh Pratchett fans?

"All the fun in *Discworld* is in seeing the dialogue... There's shit-loads of dialogue in *Discworld Noir*. Masses and masses of dialogue. Dialogue is what the *Discs* are filled with."

[redacted]

private detective who's not exactly a good guy, just less of a bad guy. And most of the time he's under suspicion from the cops... because those are the rules of how it goes. He's just stuck there between the really bad guys and the cops, and everyone double-crosses everyone else, and you can't trust anyone. If we get more specific, everyone's after a certain object. We've kind of conflated the rules of Discworld with the rules of Film Noir.

What is your working relationship with Perfect? How do you interact? Are you involved at the grass-roots level, or are you more of an Executive Producer?
In a sense, there's less now than there used to be because there hasn't needed to be as much. The first time round, on the first game, I was very involved all the time. I think I was down on the credits as "Shouting at People". The second time, as they'd done a successful game and I knew them, had less. Also with Eric Idle some stuff is going to go right out of the window, because Eric Idle is just going to do his own thing anyway. I take the view that, if you've got creative people and they've proved they can do something, you're doing no-one any favours by spending a lot of time peering over people's shoulders. Every page in the script I made changes to, but some of that was, for want of a better word, editing. Some of it was changing things to make it more canonical with Discworld. Some was adding extra gags or changing the rhythm of lines. And I've had some input on how characters look, or how characters sound. But most of the time they're much on track. I haven't had to interfere. In fact I don't normally interfere unless I'm absolutely sure of my grounds, and say, "No, that can't work like that because..."

Have you ever been tempted to become more involved in a game, then? As in writing the entire script or designing the whole structure of a game from scratch? Could you ever do a project like that?
It came close to that with *Discworld 1*. I did far more rewriting. I'm not certain I could think in the way necessary to write a game script from cold. If someone else gave me the mathematical layout of how they wanted the game to go (he traces a map in the air) as in a fork here and these things and so on, then maybe I'll be able to do it like that. It might perhaps even be quite easy. But I've got a certain amount of time. Let's say that I've got six months. If I write a novel, which with any luck will be okay because I know how to write novels, it will give X number of people a lot of fun. It will give me X amount of money. Or do I spend that time learning to be a bad radio drama writer? At the moment I'm not tempted.

As an author you're a professional storyteller. What do you make of storytelling and plot devices in games? How important do you think such elements are in a game?
I would have to say that I regard that in the sense of a narrative, if the game pretends, or suggests, that it should have one. On the whole you don't expect *Duke Nukem* to have a narrative. Go in. Get out. Shoot them up. Get to the end of the level. Kill the big boss. It's different if the game, as it were, has the sense of a narrative. I enjoyed the *Wing Commander* games because what you did, even in the early ones, affected the course of the later ones. Did you ever play *Wing Commander I?*

Yes.
You remember that then. When I played it was a new game on the block. I played it without too much experience. You go out with Paladin. He's old. The chances are that he's going to get creamed, because he's programmed not to be able to fly very well but to back you up all the time. You get back, you succeed in your mission, but he's dead. The commander says, "Oh, that was a shame as he was going to retire in a couple of months." And it's like "Oh shit!" So you reload the game... That's narrative. Then there's Maniac. Anyone in their right mind who goes out with Maniac would get out of sight of the mothership and shoot him. Or you'll let him take out a few of the ships around the place, and the minute there's only one enemy and the two of you, kill him first because he'll shoot through you to get the other one. I like the series because there was a narrative flow. I particularly liked, I think it was, *The Price Of Freedom*. The nature of the decisions you made throughout the game changed the nature of the big debate at the end. You felt you were involved in a story.

What do you think of the narrative in the games you mentioned earlier? How would you compare the second two *Tomb Raider* games? Or *Unreal?*
Oddly enough, I think that *Tomb Raider 2* had a better narrative sense to it than *Tomb Raider 3*, which seemed a little more broken up. I think it's vitally important. Once you get beyond the "Hey! Let's get a shotgun and shoot everybody!", which is quite valid, there should be a sense of narrative. That's what I disliked about *Unreal*. I got the impression that there was a narrative there, but you couldn't get your head around what was going on, except that you were going to various places and shooting different types of bad-guys. We are *homo narans*, which is story-telling man. We make up stories. All through our lives we picture things in terms of stories and we project them even onto games. It's a good thing to find a good story structure behind a game. I remember being so pissed in, I think it was, *Wing Commander II* when you had the Prince in your sights. He's bailed out. You could shoot him... you should have been able to do it. What actually happens is that on-screen the guy winches him in and he becomes a prisoner. I thought, "No." At that point you decide whether to shoot him or not. Anyone in their right mind will think, "Hmmmm... Hollywood. Shooting him isn't going to make for a good game." Doing the decent thing and wheeling him in is going to make for more interesting gameplay. In *The Price Of Freedom* you realise that all you're having to do is make decisions. If you make honourable decisions like "I will not wipe out these millions of civilians" then you're a good guy. In reality it's "Cream them!" You're making Hollywood decisions, Samurai decisions all the time. That's good. Because you're working out what the story is and taking part in it. That's how you try to play the games. You're trying to get inside the mind of the person who wrote the game.

PRATCHETT FACTS

RANDOM GOSS? WHY NOT

- Before his PC games days he owned an Amstrad and was a big fan of the isometric adventures *Head-Over-Heels* and *Batman*. Which are absolutely great.
- The first story he ever wrote was a school assignment called 'The Hades Assignment'. When published in the school magazine the headmaster stated in assembly that he disapproved of the moral tone. For the first time the magazine sold out.
- He likes Banana daiquiris. So buy him one.
- Out of all his books, his favourite is either Carpe Jugulum or Small Gods (the latter of which is GAMER's favourite too. Hurrah).
- He's sold so many books he's richer than the entire GAMER staff put together. Apart from Ross, of course.

NEXT MONTH

We'll be sitting down and talking *Daikatana* with John Romero in his Dallas lair.

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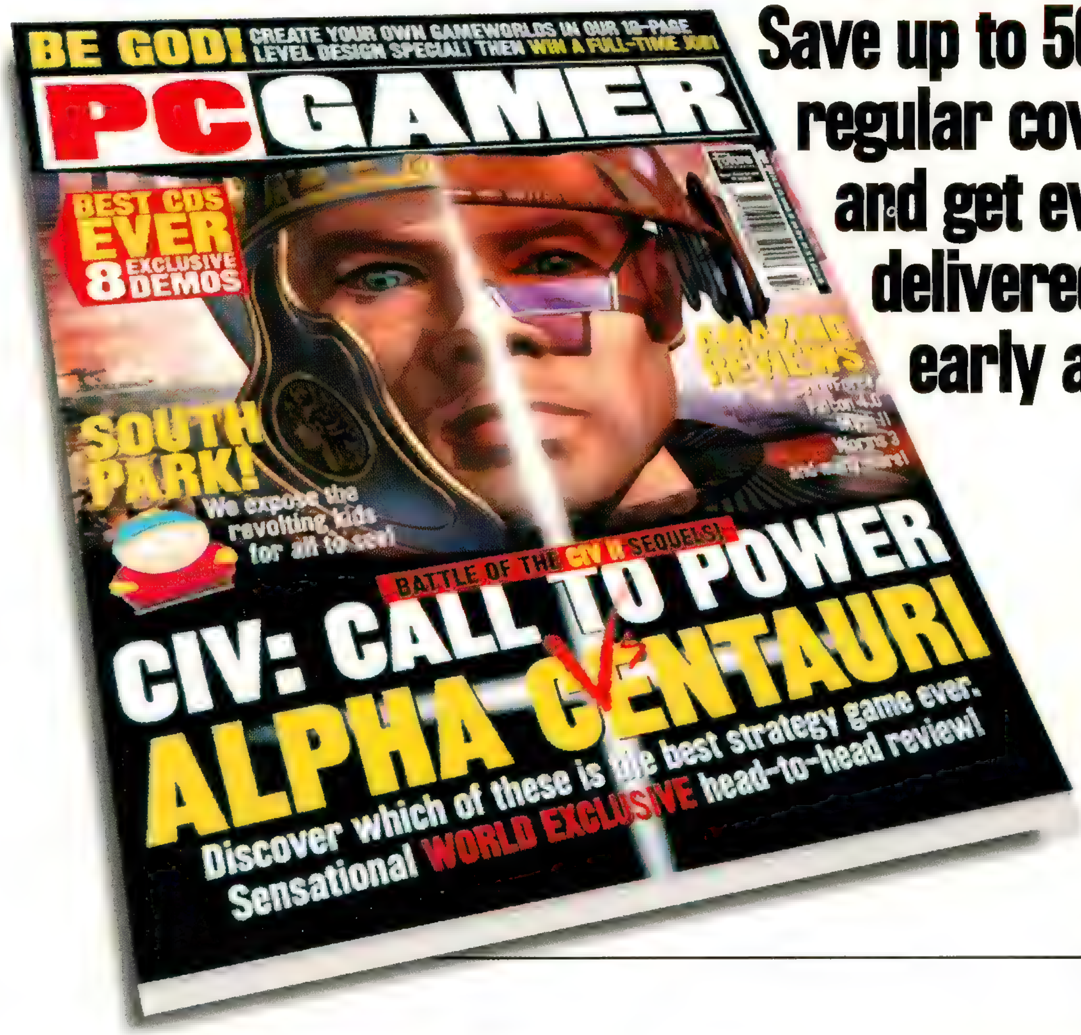
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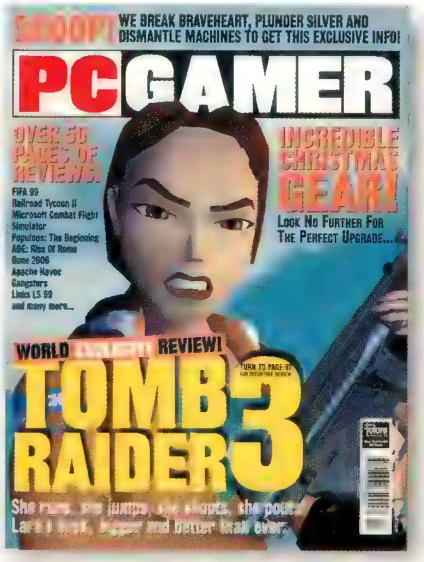
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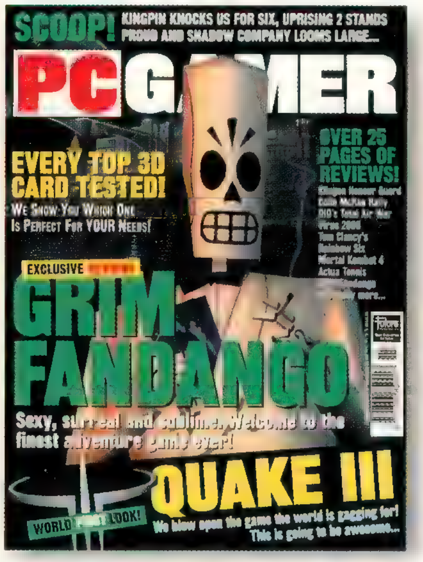
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PC GAMER

GUIDELINES

HINTS AND TIPS

TOCA 2

Can't get those lap times down? Master the intricacies of *TOCA 2*'s tracks with our definitive guide.

By ROSS ATHERTON

TIPS GUIDE

Friends. We reach a momentous hour in our empire of PC GAMER. And in this hour of trouble, when all hope is gone, when all seems doomed... comes the tips. First up is our investigation into every single corner, bend and straight bit of the premier racing game *TOCA 2*. Second, we have the fruits of Ross' many long hours of adventuring in his guide to *Baldur's Gate*. And finally, I throw a pump-action shotgun into your hand and tell you *exactly* how to use it to best effect in our handy *Gangsters* guide.

KIERON GILLEN

The wonders of Donington include a bizarre aeroplane-emerging-from-earth sculpture.

Frustrating, isn't it? Just when you thought you were getting the hang of this *TOCA 2* thing, you spin out on the final lap and lose the championship. Fear not, though, for below is a glut of useful information on every single track – including some very handy maps to show you the way – and a host of general tips to help you on your way to faster lap times and the adulation of the racing fraternity. Well, your mates, anyway.

THE TIPS

GET HOLD OF A WHEEL

With a steering wheel (preferably force feedback), your control over the car will improve dramatically, as you will be better able to make tiny changes to your line. Analogue pedals will also make a massive difference, especially in the wet. *TOCA 2* demands very fine controls, and a wheel will give you the best chance – and no excuses!

LEARN THE TRACKS

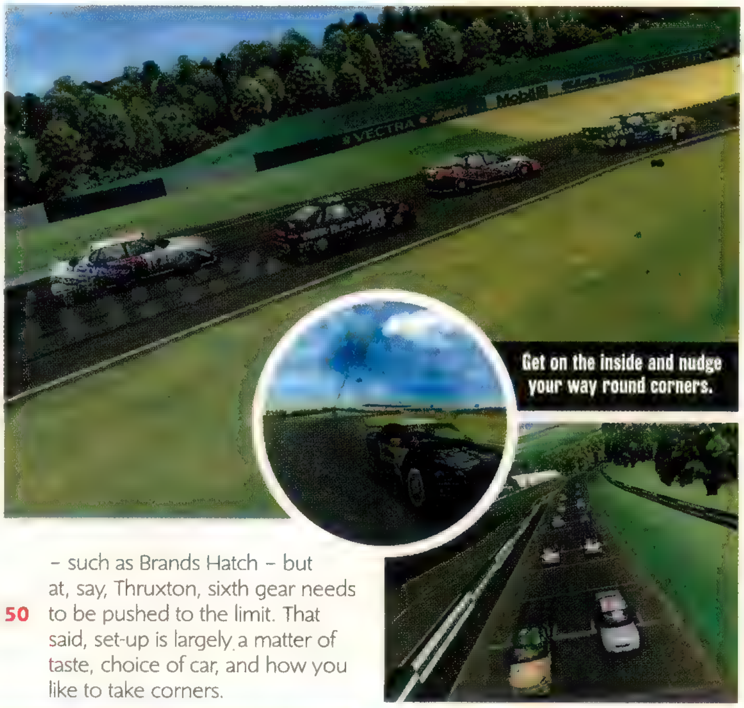
Don't attempt any serious competitions until you know all the tracks, and by this I mean you must know what is coming next and how to deal with each corner. Ideally, you should be able to mentally drive round a given course before the race itself. Apart from always being ready for the next corner, this means you will have more time to pay attention to your fellow drivers and their devious (or stupid) manoeuvrings.

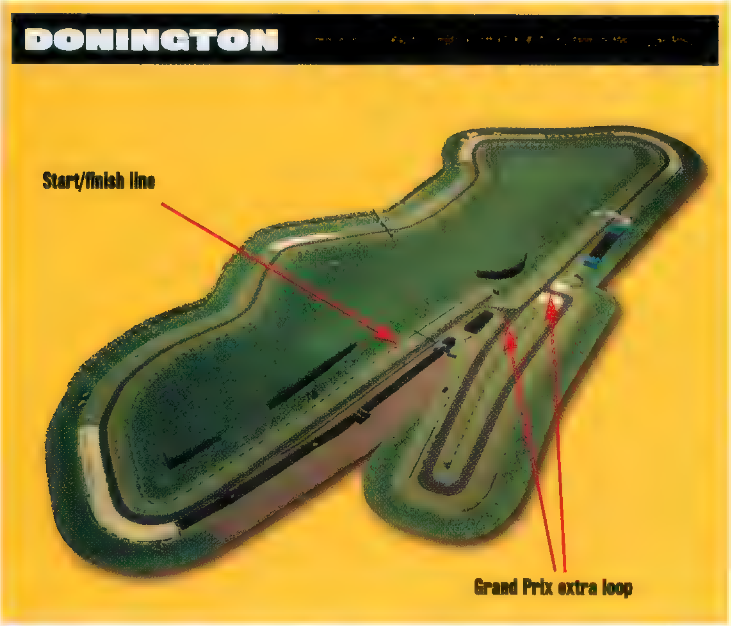
KNOW THE CARS

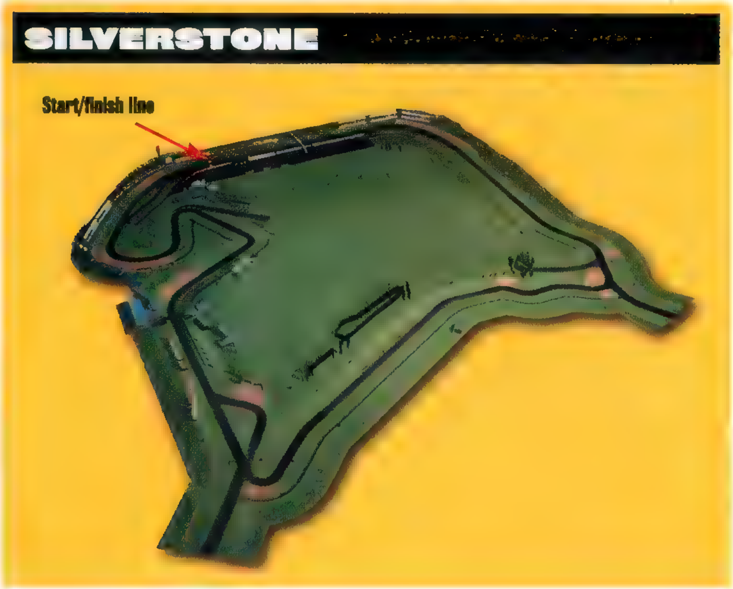
Each of the Touring cars is slightly different in terms of power and handling. Work out which suits your style, and learn what it will and won't do. The Honda, Audi, Volvo and Renault cars have a little more power than the others, so you may want to try these first – or try a less powerful car at first in order to learn the tracks at a reasonable pace.

LEARN TO SET UP THE CAR

Use common sense to set the car up appropriately for the different tracks: most important here is your gear ratios. For some tracks, your ratios won't need changing – such as Brands Hatch – but at, say, Thruxton, sixth gear needs to be pushed to the limit. That said, set-up is largely a matter of taste, choice of car, and how you like to take corners.


Get on the inside and nudge your way round corners.





CORNERING SKILLS

Learn how to take corners properly. Remember that if you spin off at a corner, you can kiss goodbye to your chances of winning, so make sure you don't. Get used to standing on the brakes at the appropriate moment; *TOCA 2* is not one of those games where you rarely use the other pedal!

Get down to the appropriate speed well in advance, and ease off as you swing into the corner from wide. Accelerate out once you pass the apex. If you're heading into a corner in a pack, take the inside line and use the other cars to guide you round: you'll have a higher velocity and better line than the others.

SHORT-CUTS

Some of the tracks (particularly the bonus tracks) have shortcuts which may shear valuable seconds off your lap times by by-passing nasty corners or chicanes. Learn which of them are useful, and which to avoid.

THE PIT-STOP

When you stop, listen to your pit crew as they often have important stuff to say. Keep ⇨

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FOUL PLAY

MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

Since Mark reviewed this game, the office insult of choice has moved from "I'm going to make you my bitch" to "I'm going to blight your soul". Well... it hasn't actually. But it could if we all started saying it. Perhaps these cheats will help the "I'm going to blight your soul" insult rise to power?

To unlock all the levels, just press the SHIFT key while you're selecting a new game. And to automatically win a scenario just press CTRL and – during play. Simultaneously, of course.

DETHKARZ

The new wave of games with Z instead of S continues, much to our general annoyance. People should realise that it doesn't make you appear to be 'down wit da kidz'. It makes you appear to have rudimentary grammar skills and a strange fetish for early Eighties hip-hop. Which, now we come to think of it, is quite cool.

Press and hold SHIFT, CTRL and C on the main screen. This will open the cheats option. On this wonderful new sub-screen simply type one of the following cheats. And you'll get the implied reward. Isn't the world a wonderful place?

GLOBAL – Makes all tracks selectable
DEV 6 – Allows access to all cars
RACE CORPS – Allows all seasons to be accessed in Championship mode

➪ track of when your team-mate is pitting, and (obviously) don't go in when he is there.

KEEP OFF THE GRASS

As soon as you hit the grass, the car becomes almost impossible to control. Don't steer sharply; if you can get back on the track by carrying on in a straight line, do so. Otherwise, ease off the accelerator and very gently steer back towards the track. A spin onto grass can take ages to recover from. Whenever you feel a spin coming on, ease off the accelerator and the car should right itself.

THE TRACKS

TEST TRACK

Use the test track to experiment with everything the game has to offer. Get used to driving on slippery surfaces and controlling spins, and take the opportunity to try out all the cars. Most importantly, though, familiarise yourself with the effects of the set-up options. Via the pause menu, you can change the configuration mid-lap, so you can immediately experience the difference.

DONINGTON GP

At the end of the start/finish straight is the right-hander Redgate, so get on the left for a wide entry. Soon after is Hollywood, a gentler right-hander which takes you down to the fast gentle left of Craner Curves – you shouldn't need to brake here. Slow down a lot and turn in early for the sharp right-hander of the Old Hairpin, then under the bridge to get to McLeans after a couple of gentle curves. McLeans is sharp and tricky with a deadly gravel trap – get it right at all costs or you'll be at the back.

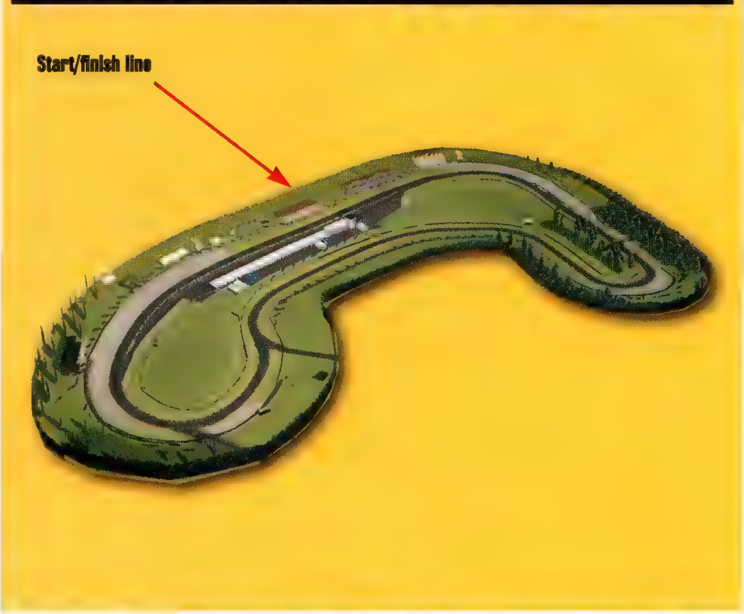
Coppice is next, an undemanding right-hander, followed by the straight where the pedal should be on the metal all the way. Get on the right side early on, then brake sharply – timing here is very tricky – and move cleanly through the Esses. Clip the rumble strips and accelerate down the straight on the left of the track. Beware early-braking cars here; the corner is a sharp hairpin and notoriously difficult to get right. Goddards is the last corner, and can be taken with late braking and a hard cut across the apex. Hammer the accelerator and cross the line.

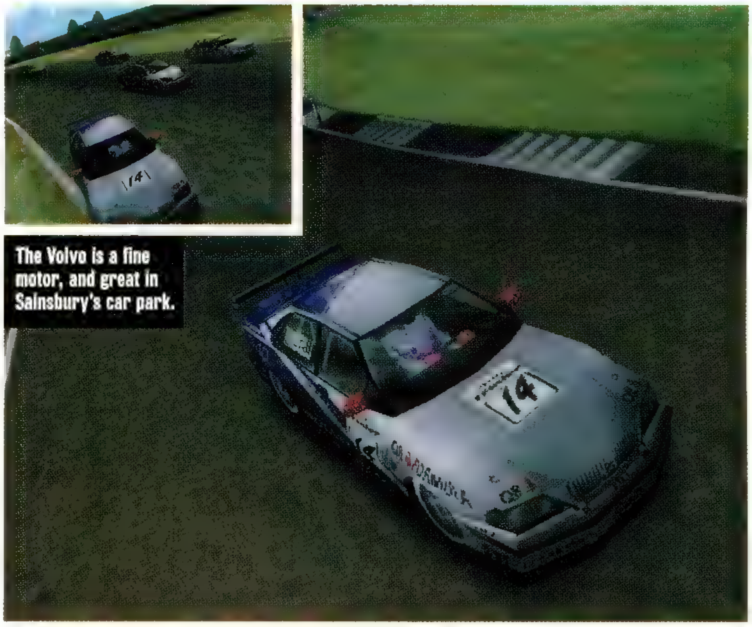
SILVERSTONE

Copse, the first corner, is a fast right-hander which can be taken almost flat out in a Touring car if you get the line right. Get on the right of the track and burn down the straight towards Maggotts, which throws you left, then right. After Becketts, accelerate hard down to the Farm hairpin, staying on the left. At the 100m marker, throttle off; brake at the 50m marker and make a hard right. At the apex, hit the gas, straighten up gradually and get some speed up for Bridge, which can be taken at almost full speed.

A couple of gentle curves lead under the bridge to the Priory left-hander. Get on the right of the track, brake hard then turn sharply and aim to straighten up on the rumble strips on the right side. Brake hard and early for the next left-hander, and swing wide as you accelerate out. Luffield is an easy right-hander which can be taken almost at top speed, then you're back on the home straight.

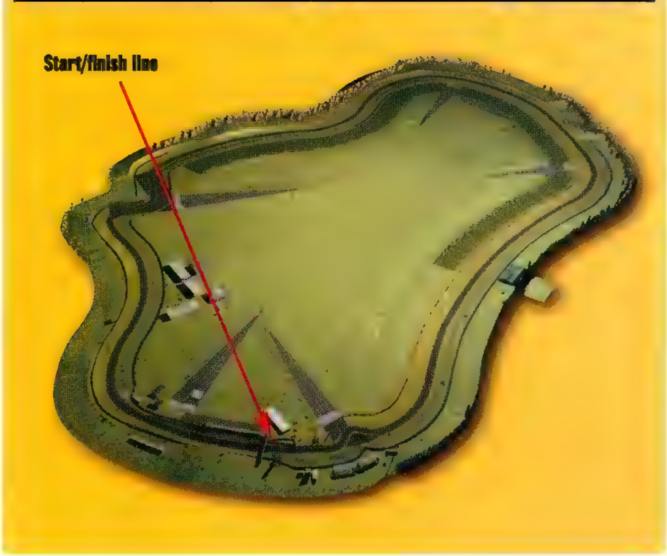
BRANDS HATCH

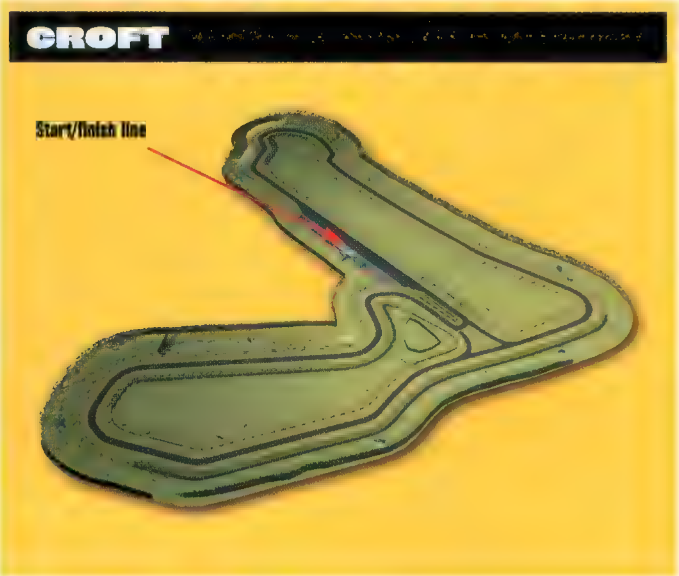




The Volvo is a fine motor, and great in Sainsbury's car park.

THRUXTON





THRUXTON

Keep to the right as you set off and go through the gentle right bend of Allard. As you go down the hill, ease over to the left. Brake hard and accelerate out, then left through Cobb, clipping the kerb. Then head right up the hill through Seagrave, and onto the left-hander at Noble, which is less sharp than it seems, so don't turn sharply.

Goodwood is a long, gentle curve, but be prepared for the tightening corner at Village. The rest of the track can be done at a higher speed; after the gentle curves is a tight chicane (Club), which can be taken fast provided your line is spot-on. Aim to clip each kerb and you should go through fine. Full acceleration, after that, to the finish line.

BRANDS HATCH

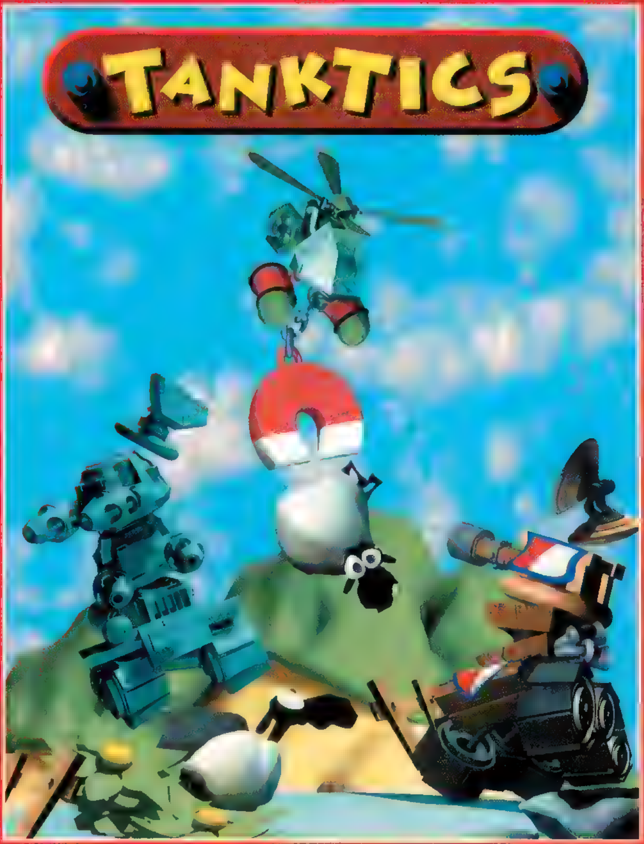
This track, although the shortest, is also very bumpy and has plenty of banked and adverse camber sections to keep you on your toes. The first corner, Paddock Hill, is a right-hander, which drops away. Therefore line is all-important; and you should concentrate on clipping the apex at the right speed then flooring it. As you pass under the bridge, move to the left and brake early for the full hairpin at Druids.

Graham Hill, the next left-hander, must be approached from the right then taken flat out, clipping the apex. You can accelerate through Surtees if your entry speed is right, but beware the uneven road here. Brake sharply for the sudden right-hander that leads into McLaren, going steeply uphill and into the two long curves.

Beware these curves, as it is not one simple sweep around, and you should take care not to drift to the left. When you can see the pit entrance, it is safe to floor it and head for the line.

The Superblowers like to get kinky.

From the Designers of Lemmings



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FOUL PLAY

MECHCOMMANDER

While we tend to be Transformer people here in the GAMER office (there's something about their Eighties plastic excesses which tickle our souls lightly with a pleasure-feather), the heavy duty Battletech Mechs have provided us with some cybernetic jaunts. As they do with this.

Anyway, these cheats will only work if you've upgraded your copy of *MechCommander* to version 1.8. Then you have to pop over to the directory where you've installed the game and rename the windows.fit file to ixtlriimceourl (though, as always, make a copy of the file before messing around with it). Then, during the logistics phase, you can type in any of these codes to find yourself pumped up with power.

Poundofflesh – 1,000,000 resource points
rockandrollpeople – Removes drop weight limit

Or alternatively, during a mission type the following for bonuses.

Deadeye – Max gunnery skills on all MechWarriors for the mission
glennrocksthehouse – (at the start of a mission) Completely salvage destroyed Mechs
getsalvage – (at the start of a mission) Completely salvage destroyed Mechs
lorrie – Repairs armour and weapons
lordbunny – Unlimited instantaneous artillery strikes (Press B and left-click to use)
mineeyeshaveseentheglory – Reveals entire map
osmium – Makes all your units invulnerable
CTRL+ALT+W – Completes current mission
framegraph – Displays current frame rate

ODDWORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS

Knowing Abe's sophisticated levels of comic wit, we're probably talking about the exodus of methane from Abe's backside. However, I wouldn't break wind in the presence of these cheats, as they may take offence and go away. Which you really wouldn't want them to do.

To play any level, hold down SHIFT while you press DOWN, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, UP. To view all the movies in a big cinema-style presentation, hold down SHIFT and type in UP, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, DOWN on the arrow keys.

OULTON PARK

Head at full speed towards Old Hall, which is a moderate right-hander and can be taken at almost full speed, with a good, wide line. Clip the apex and power out. At Cascades, you can cruise in without too much braking, but you'll have to brake hard at the tight Fosters right-hander. The track is fairly bumpy on the left before Knickerbrook, which can be taken at high speed, clipping the rumble strips as you do so.

Full speed over the slight rise, and ease off slightly for the long right at Druids. Lodge is tight, and needs firm braking to avoid a trip into the barriers. Accelerate hard away from Lodge towards the finish line.

DONINGTON SHORT

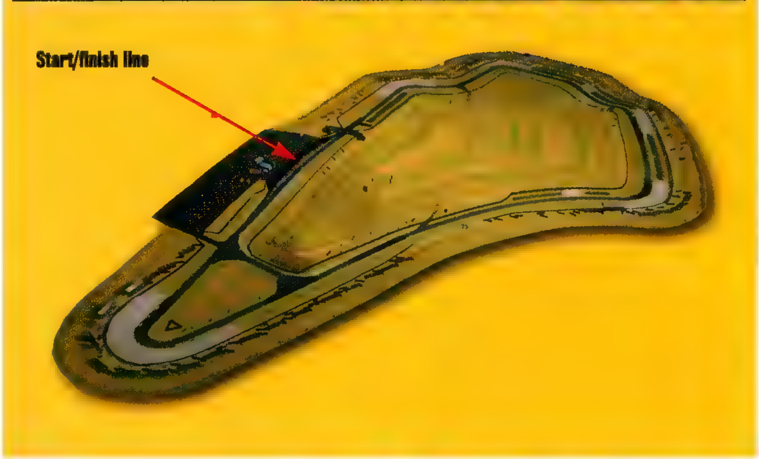
The shortened track is the same as the GP track (above), except that the Esses and hairpin after Coppice are replaced by a chicane which leads into Goddards. So stay on the left after Coppice, brake hard for the new chicane and drift to the right for the line.

CROFT

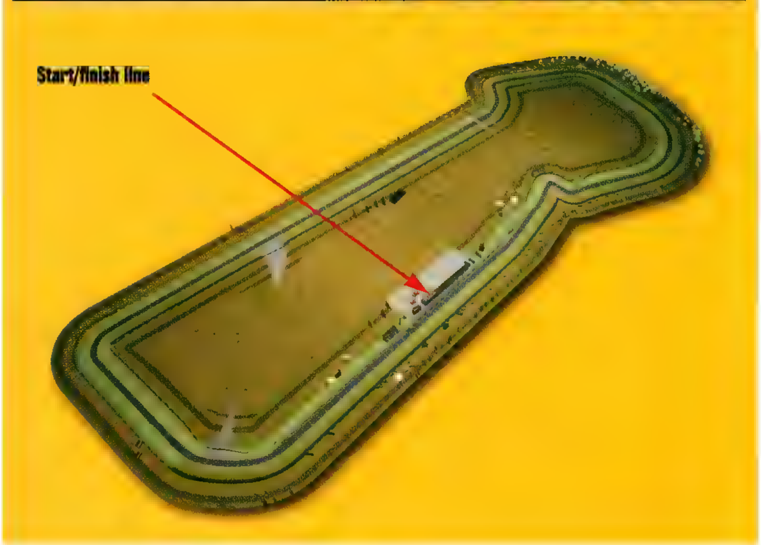
Tricky track, this. Power down the straight, keeping to the left. Brake gently and aim for the first apex on the right; then head for the apex on the left-hand bend. You should be at the right speed to take the final long right-hander which leads you to the chicane. You can get through this without braking, but if you hit the barrier on the left, you'll crash messily. Pile on the power as you head for Tower Bend, and brake early. Take the corner at about 75mph, and power down the straight.

Shimmy through the Esses (try to clip both apexes) and ease off for the Sunny right-hand double-apex. If you stay in the centre of the track for this corner, you'll be safe. Power up and sweep through the left-hander, then stay on the left to brake and turn in early for the sharp right-hander. Power out and brake hard for the final hairpin, which should be taken with great care. Accelerate hard and go for the line.

KNOCKHILL



SNETTERTON



Little in life can compare to the joy of firmly nudging a fellow racer off the track.

KNOCKHILL

Keep to the left on the first straight, and ease off for the first right-hander. Don't clip the apex too hard. As you come out of the next gentle left-hander, straighten up early and get a good line into the following McIntyre right-hander. Accelerate hard out of Butchers and keep on the left for the chicane. Clip the strips and hammer down the short straight.

You can take Clarke at full power, cutting the apex and running wide as you exit. Accelerate hard along the straight, and don't brake until you pass the 100m sign. Turn in late to the hairpin and accelerate out, and floor it to the finish line.

SNETTERTON

Get on the left, and get wide for the first right-hander. It can be taken ⇨

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Fatal Racing
Fifa 96, 97 & 98
Final Doom
Final Fantasy VII
Flight Unlimited 1 & 2
Formula 1
Formula 1 Grand Prix
Forsaken
Frogger
Full Throttle
F-22 Lightning 11
Gex
Goblins
G Police
Grand Theft Auto
Hercules
Hexen 1 & 2
Hi Octane
Indianapolis 500
Interstate 76
Interstate 76 Nitro Pack
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Lemmings 2 & 3D
Machine Hunter
Madden NFL 97 & 98
Magic Carpet 1 & 2
Mass Destruction
MDK
Mechcommander
Men in Black
Microsoft Flight Sim 98
Monopoly
Monster Truck Madness 1 & 2
Mortal Kombat 1, 2, 3 & 4
Mortal Kombat Trilogy
Moto Racer
Motorhead
Nascar 2
NBA Hangtime
NBA Jam Extreme
NBA Live 95, 96, 97 & 98
Need For Speed 1, 2 & 3
NFL Quarterback Club
NHL 97 & 98
NHL Breakaway 98
Nightmare Creatures
Nuclear Strike
Outrun
Pandemonium 1 & 2
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Pitfall
POD
Premier Manager 1 & 2
Pro Pinball
Quake 1 & 2
Railroad Tycoon 2
Rainbow Islands
Rally Cross
Rayman
Resident Evil 2
Road Rash
Screamer 1 & 2
Screamer Rally
SimCity 2000
Sonic and Knuckles Collection
Sonic 3D Blast
Street Fighter Alpha
Street Fighter 2
Super Bubsy
Super Frog
SWIV 3D
Syndicate Wars
Test Drive 1, 2, 4 & Off Road
The Hunt for Red October
Theme Hospital
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Toy Story
Triple Play 97, 98 & 99
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US Navy Fighters 1 & 97
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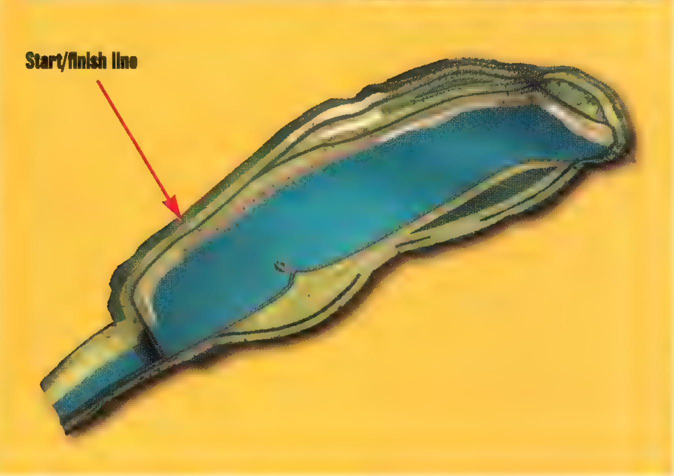
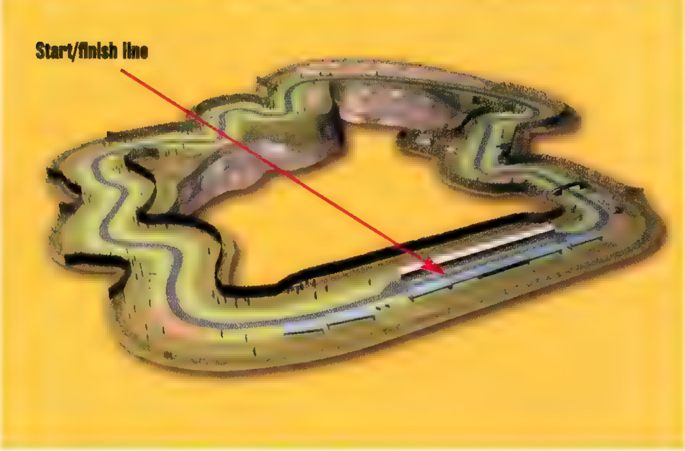
LOCH RANOCH


Start/finish line

ALPINE


Start/finish line

⇨ at full power, clipping the first apex, but at a slightly slower pace you can aim just to clip the second on exiting. Brake hard for Sear, turn early, clip the apex, and build up your speed. Power down the straight and brake hard and early for the short left-hander which follows.

This is followed by a tricky left-right series which should be taken very slowly. Hit the power and cruise through Bomb Hole and Coram. You'll have to brake hard for the Russel Bend chicane, especially if you see a bunch of cars here. Accelerate as soon as you can and charge for the line.

LOCH RANOCH

This track, finest of the new courses, has two possible routes; the 'racing line' and the 'dirt track'.

For the 'racing line' route, head up the hill at full speed and take the left fork, which leads to Bruce Bend. Ease off a little, and cruise round at near-top speed. Head downhill through Forest Pass, and stand on the brakes for the Croft Crossing right-hander. Speed up to full, then slow over the bridge. Full speed again for Wood Corner, but take care along the bumpy Low Road. At the castle, slow down for the quick left. Speed along to Dam corner, braking for the corner onto the Dam itself, then full speed through Porter's to the line.

To take the 'dirt track' route, take the right at the fork after the start. Slow right down for the sharp drop at Peregrine, then hammer along to Croft Crossing, braking a little as you crest the hill before the crossing. Take care at Porter, as you'll have to be going fairly slow. At the junction, turn left to go on the High Road, which is quite fast. Beware the bends, particularly the second, which is slippery. To make Dam Corner, you'll need to lose a lot of speed and gain control to use the lay-by to assist your cornering. You can use full speed then all the way to the line. ⇨

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FOUL PLAY

WARHAMMER 40K: CHAOS GATE

A straw poll around the office reveals that enough cash to buy a small house (i.e. not Ross') was spent on Games Workshop's little metal men during our teenage years. If only *Chaos Gate* had been around, perhaps we could afford to live in something a little more expensive than the cardboard boxes in which we find ourselves crouched.

As seems to be the running theme this issue, you have to modify files for this to work. As always, back them up before messing around. Go to the data file in the game directory. Here you can edit any of the files to alter various bits and pieces in the game, including names, weapon statistics, experience awarded for a kill, vehicle statistics, the Psychic powers and a few more. The following files are perhaps the most important. I've also noted what each one mainly deals with. Also remember that if you modify certain things, it'll boost the Chaos Marines too. Which would be bad, I'd imagine.

Accounting.dat – Experience
SpellDef.dat – Psyker Powers
VehicDef.dat – Vehicle Statistics
WeapDef.dat – Weapon Statistics
UltNames. – Ultramarine Names
ChaNames.dat – Chaos Names

BLADE RUNNER

The problem with this homage to Film Noir is that it's a brutal and senseless world full of dark and dingy people. Who are poor. You may wish to remove yourself from the swamp of poverty with this cheat.

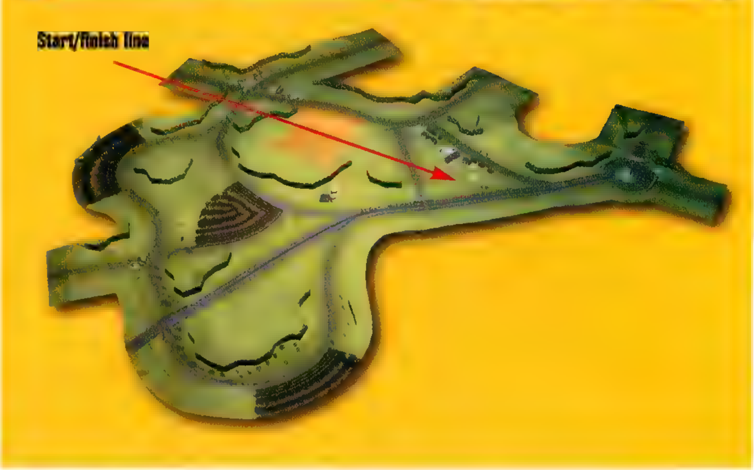
Basically, start the game on easy. When McCoy stops before the animal store in the first scene restart the game on easy. And, if everything is working, you should have an infinite wad of cash. You can make sure by moving to the menu screen and looking at the money area. It should display the symbol for infinity. You know the one. And if you don't, you will, because it'll be there. An educational cheat.

ALPINE TRACK

Head right into Parson's Nose, where you begin the ascent. There are three bends in quick succession; avoid the grass, drift round and accelerate gently out. The 90-degree Headline requires you to be hard on the right; after this are the Helter Skelter, which is best tackled with no other cars around. Try to get into a rhythm, using the rumble strips to achieve a consistent speed and line.

After this is a steep descent to Quarry Straight, at the end of which is a full hairpin, Hill Hook. After easing right down for this, power up to full speed for the slight left-hander and past the castle. Brake a little to clip both strips at Chase, and accelerate towards White Rock, which can be taken quite fast and tight. Floor it up to the finish.

KASTLE, BAVARIA

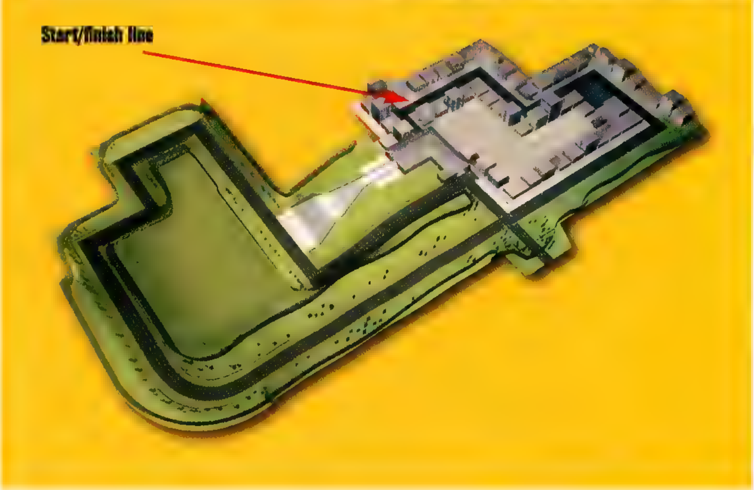


KASTLE, BAVARIA

At the end of the first straight is a roundabout; around which you will turn 180 degrees. Take it at about 75mph, using the rumble strips; but note that there are no strips on the straight which follows. At Village, tap the brakes and take the moderate left at about 75mph again. Drift to the right side as you accelerate down the straight to Raven Junction.

Brake hard and late, and sweep wide at about 60mph. Stay right again, and drift round Bergenstein Curve. Ease off a little as you go under the bridge, and take a wide right-to-left approach at The Pines, after which you need to take a wide left-to-right approach for the last corner. The straight to the line is fast and, er, straight.

DOWNTOWN USA



DOWNTOWN USA

Beware these sharp 90-degree corners! Tackle them by going as wide as possible then cutting in very sharply to get a good line into the next road. The first corner takes you into the mall which has a very slippery floor; you can either take an early right down some stone steps or go straight on for a sharp right-hander. If you choose the former, take it very slowly and then take the steps at about 80mph. Then turn right onto 18th St. If you take the latter option, take the sharp right at Mall Corner, then brake hard as you go down the slope and exit onto 18th St.

There are three 90-degree corners in succession; take them wide, cut in late and pump the gas. The fourth corner you can take faster, then accelerate onto City Straight and City Curve, which is a fast easy left-hander. Take it through Park pretty quickly, move into the third lane ready for the barrier chicane, and then into the Financial District. Take the 90-degree left-hander into 14th St at around 85mph, then a sharp left to get onto 1st St. There are two further simple 90-degree turns to take you back to 2nd Ave and over the start line for another lap. PCG

This is what happens if you follow the track guides in reverse...

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ISSUE 43 ON SALE TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY

PLAYING GUIDE

BALDUR'S GATE

Tearing out your beard in frustration over the intricacies of *Baldur's Gate*? Follow this simple Scroll of Tippage and all will be well.

By ROSS ATHERTON

FOUL PLAY

COMMANDOS

The enemies of GAMER are closing in on us. Where once we just strolled into the office and got typing (after a cup of tea, natch), we now have to crawl under barbed wire, slash the throats of smoking guards and scuba-dive up the stairs to the office. If only these updated cheats for *Commandos* worked, our working lives would be easier.

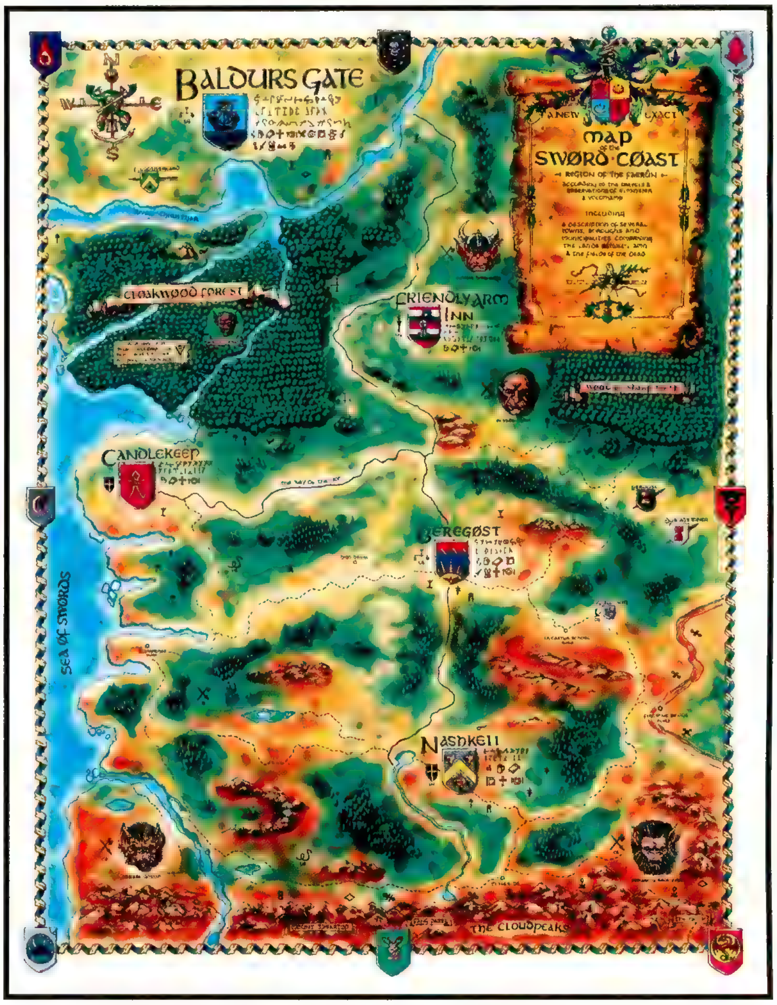
Type GONZO1982 (or, if that doesn't work, 1982GONZO) while the game is playing, then press the following to gain the applicable bonus.

SHIFT+V- Makes you invisible to enemy
SHIFT+X- Teleports trooper to where cursor is
CTRL+I- Invincibility
CTRL+SHIFT+N – Finish the mission
STRG-I- God mode
STRG+SHIFT+N – Complete the mission

PICKING A PARTY

The most crucial aspect of *Baldur's Gate* is the composition and abilities of your party. There are times, particularly later on in the game, where you will really struggle if you do not have a particular type of character or are weak in a certain skill.

Your first concern, though, is your main character; 'you'. For an easy life, pick a warrior class, as you will be doing a great deal of fighting early on. Picking a Mage, Druid, Thief or Cleric will certainly be more challenging, as at first you will lack the protection of powerful fighters. Take your time rolling attributes; they may not seem very important now, but they can't be changed. When you 'roll' stats, count up how many points you get in total, as it varies from roll to roll. Remember that you can alter where the points are allocated, so what really matters is the total number of points – a total of 90 is pretty good, but invest some time here and it will pay dividends later.



Tsk. Those naughty mages, throwing light bulbs at each other again.

Look for a high Constitution whatever your class, as this affects how much damage your character can take. Warriors also need a high Strength, Thieves need a high Dexterity, Clerics and Druids rely on Wisdom and Mages need high Intelligence scores. If your main character has a high Charisma score, you will be more likely to retain fractious members of your party and receive positive results when interacting with people.

Over the course of the game, you will meet a wide variety of characters who want to join your party; around twenty-five in all. Their level and experience points depend on that of your main character when you meet them, so don't worry about going back to pick up people later on; provided they have not been in your party at any time. If you ditch someone, and then try to get them back, beware that they will not have gained any experience points in your absence!

The issue of alignment will prevent some potential party members hanging around with you for long, so when you create your main character you should have in mind whether you want to play as an essentially 'good' or 'bad' character. Obviously, characters will be happy joining you if their alignment roughly matches yours, and if they are unhappy they will tell you so. In terms of difficulty, you may find it harder to play as a 'bad' party, as some people won't trust you, the authorities may cause problems, and shopping will be more expensive (no, really). Depending on your alignment, certain sub-quests won't be available to you.

The actual composition of your party is a moot point. Most people prefer to have a mixed party with a wide range of abilities, but others prefer to specialise and have, say, a majority of magic users and just a couple of fighters. While this will give excellent ranged abilities, the party would struggle in confined spaces where toe-to-toe combat is essential, or when a specialist archer is required. My personal preference is for a mixed

Yes, I know you can't read it. Check the cover discs for the full-size maps.

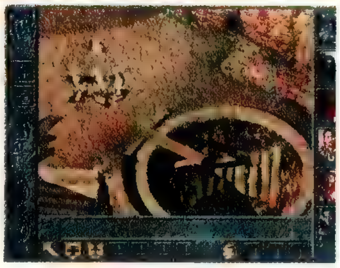
good-aligned party comprising the following characters which are found in the game:

Main character, Fighter
Ajantis, Paladin
Branwen, Cleric
Kivan, Ranger
Imoen, Thief
Dynaheir, Mage

The party's marching order is very important: remember that your leading characters will be attacked much more often than characters further down your order, so warriors with lots of hit points should be at the top. The top character will also do much of the interaction with NPCs, so high Charisma is also important here. If you are going to be attacked from the side, you may want to alter this order so that tougher characters will be on the right side of the formation to receive any attacks.

Give some thought to formations, and pick suitable configurations according to environment, group composition and personal preference. Characters purely armed with missile weapons should be at the back, as should magic-users. Bear in mind, though, that some spells (e.g. Aganazzar's Scorcher, a personal favourite, and lightning spells) need a clear line of sight to avoid damaging your own characters.

Underground, or where navigation is difficult, try using the 'follow' formation; however, this is notoriously fickle and can result in your characters scuttling off into the darkness. Instead, you can try moving them one at a time. The wedge formation is a good all-rounder for exploring open areas.



EQUIPMENT TIPS

As my Dad always says, you won't get anywhere without the right tools for the job. Mind you, he has a Pentium 60. Equipping your characters appropriately, though, is very important. Learn what your characters can and can't use: when shopping, always switch to the character the equipment is being bought for. That way, you'll never buy something the character can't use. If you have multi-classed characters, the equipment restrictions can be quite byzantine, so beware.

Most items of equipment are self-explanatory, but experimentation is advisable to see how different kit affects your style of play. Use bastard swords rather than long swords, as they inflict more damage but can still be used with a shield. Don't bother with non-magical jewellery – enemies are unlikely to stop fighting to comment on your dress sense. Bigger shields are definitely worth it, if you can take the weight. Axes and hammers are disappointing, and the latter should only really be used by Clerics. Armour is straightforward enough, but beware of overloading characters with spare sets of heavy equipment and armour. It's always handy to

⇨

WHAT KIND OF GAMERS WILL RELISH THIS CHALLENGE..?
...VETERANS?
PYRO
EIDOS

FOUL PLAY

SIMCITY 3000

Not named because it goes up to the year 3000, but rather because it's got around 3000 cheats for it. We'll give you these noble codes that you'll be sure to find some use for. Though, in all probability, that use will be cheating. Fair enough.

To enter these codes, hold down CTRL, SHIFT, ALT and C simultaneously. A little window will appear, and in this space you should enter your code. Do so. If you like.

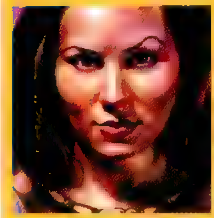
I am weak – Makes buildings, utilities, zoning, transportation, planting trees and creating surface water completely free.
call cousin Vinnie – A new petitioner item will appear in the Meet window, announcing a 'Local Fundraising Event'. He'll offer you some cash. Should you choose to accept his offer, you'll receive a little cash.
zyxwvu – Only available to those who have used the previous cheat, then refused the offer. The sparkling *SimCity* Castle will appear in your rewards menu, which will increase land value, aura and lots of other things.
garbage in, garbage out – Makes all garbage buildings available for use.
power to the masses – All power buildings become available.
water in the desert – Makes all water buildings available.
Salt on – Makes the sea salt water.
Salt off – Makes the sea fresh water.
Terrain one up – Raises the terrain.
Terrain one down – Lowers the terrain.
Terrain ten up – Raises the terrain... by ten.
Terrain ten down – Lowers the terrain. Strangely expected.

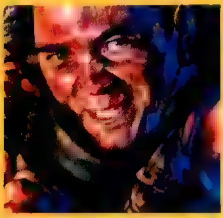
And for 'humorous' responses, try these...

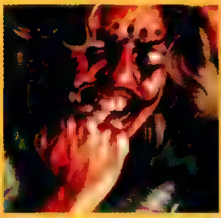
1234
ADVISOR
BAT
BROCCOLI
ELECTRONIC ARTS
ERTS
FUND
HELLO
HELP
LLAMA
MAYOR
MAXIS
MONEY
MOREMONEY
PORNTIPSGUZZARDO
SC3K
SCURK
SIM
SIMCITY
TICKER

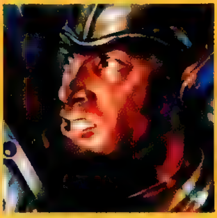
PRESENTING: THE SUPPORTING CAST

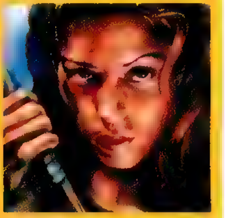
These are the 25 characters who can join your party throughout the game. Some of them are in pairs, and won't voluntarily split; others may have an inappropriate alignment for your group and won't join. The party-poopers.

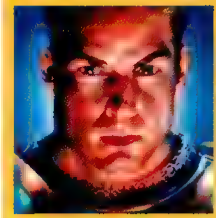

IMOEN
THIEF
FIRST AREA, AFTER GORION IS KILLED

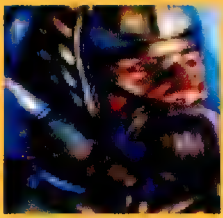

MONTARON
FIGHTER/THIEF
AFTER YOU MEET WITH IMOEN, TO THE EAST

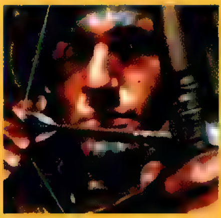

XZAR
NECROMANCER
PAIRED WITH MONTARON

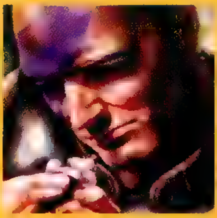

KHALID
FIGHTER
WAITING AT THE FRIENDLY ARM INN

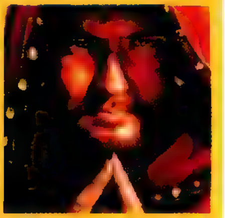

JAHEIRA
FIGHTER/DRUID
PAIRED WITH KHALID

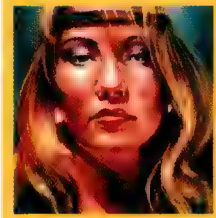

GARRICK
BARD
CENTRAL BEREGOST

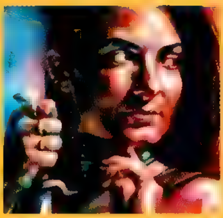

KAGAIN
FIGHTER
A HOUSE IN WEST BEREGOST

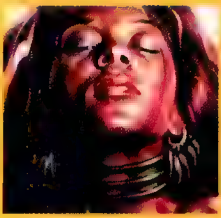

KIVAN
RANGER
HIGH HEDGE, NORTH OF THE WIZARD'S SHOP

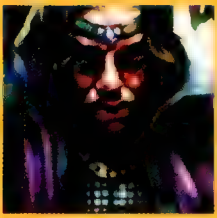

MINSC
RANGER
NASHKEL, PAIRED WITH DYNAHEIR

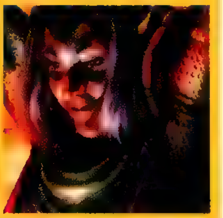

EDWIN
CONJURER
SOUTHERN NASHKEL, ON THE BRIDGE

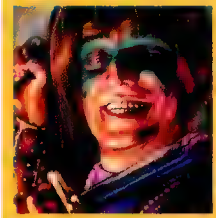

BRANWEN
CLERIC
NASHKEL FAIR (STONE STATUE)

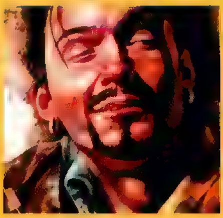

SAFANA
THIEF
WEST-SOUTH WEST OF BEREGOST

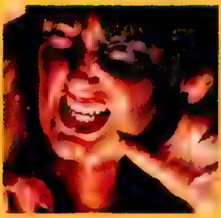

DYNAHEIR
INVOKER
HELD AT GNOLL STRONGHOLD

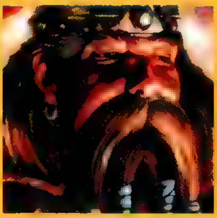

XAN
ENCHANTER
LOWEST LEVEL OF NASHKEL MINES

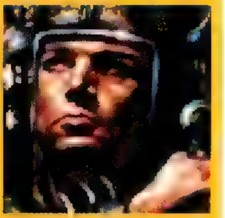

VICONIA
CLERIC
PELDVALE, HELD BY FLAMING FIST

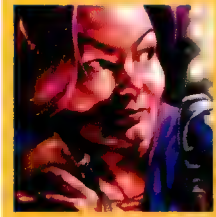

CORAN
FIGHTER/THIEF
FIRST CLOAKWOOD AREA

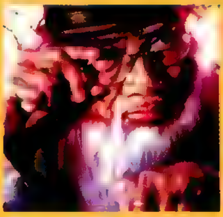

ELDOTH KRON
BARD
THIRD CLOAKWOOD AREA

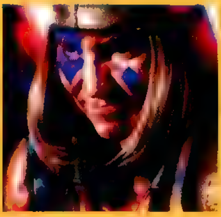

FALDORN
DRUID
THIRD CLOAKWOOD AREA

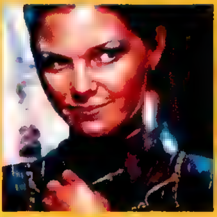

YESLICK
FIGHTER/CLERIC
LOWEST LEVEL OF CLOAKWOOD MINES

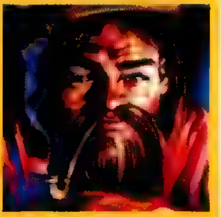

AJANTIS
PALADIN
NORTH OF FRIENDLY ARM


ALORA
THIEF
HALL OF WONDERS, BALDUR'S GATE


QUAYLE
CLERIC/ ILLUSIONIST
ENTRANCE TO BALDUR'S GATE


SHAR TEEL
FIGHTER
EAST OF BEREGOST


SKIE
THIEF
NORTH-WEST BALDUR'S GATE


TIAX
CLERIC/THIEF
SOUTH-WEST BALDUR'S GATE

have a very strong party member, as their weight allowance will permit you to carry home your booty.

When picking stuff up from bodies after a fight, get in the habit of checking for magical items. Mostly you will only get magic kit from named characters or 'boss' creatures, but occasionally an ordinary creature is carrying items of value. Right-click on a suspect item, and if there is an 'Identify' button on the panel, it is magical. Never equip anything until it has been identified, as some items are cursed, and some can be debilitating. Shops will keep items you sell them in their 'for sale' list, but bear in mind the crippling resale prices the shopkeepers charge if you want things back. Think carefully about getting rid of magic items, as your party may change and someone might be able to use a specific piece of equipment.

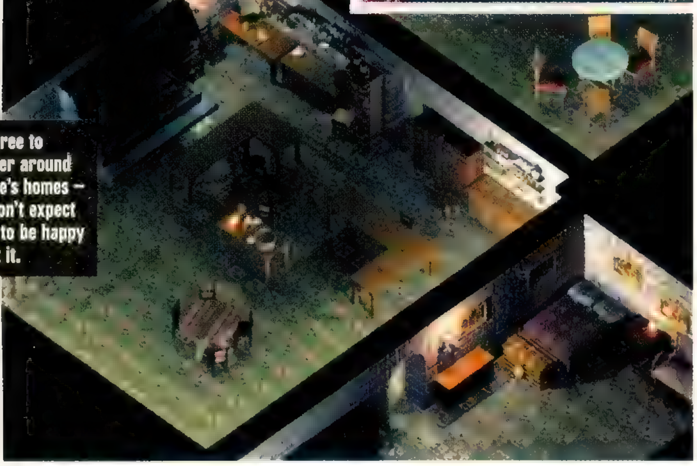
You'll find a lot of scrolls and potions in certain places; these can be invaluable in combat and you shouldn't be afraid to use them – you can also buy them in shops. Some scrolls can also be used by your mages to learn new spells. Scrolls, like potions, can also be stacked; so you can have a stack of useful spells in your quickslots without them taking up much room.

ADVENTURING TIPS

The reason a Thief is such an invaluable character is that their skills are essential to speedy progress. Most particularly, 'Hide In Shadows' allows you to explore areas without giving away your presence and being attacked. In this way you can pick and choose your battles, and uncover the secrets of the map quickly. You can also launch surprise attacks using this method: once you have uncovered a group of enemies, leave the hidden character within sight of them and bring up a mage to cast offensive or tangling spells at them while still out of sight.

The usefulness of this skill depends on how good the Thief is; the percentage score is the chance the thief has to remain hidden. If the test is failed, the thief 'reappears' and may be discovered. When the Thief gains a level, points may be allocated to any of the four skills to improve the abilities; magical items and potions may also affect these scores. If your Thief's 'Hide In Shadows' skill is over 100%, they will hardly ever fail and reappear, so you can have them on semi-permanent spotting duty.

The 'Find Traps' skill is also extremely useful, as some areas are heavily trapped. Areas to be particularly careful in are: the cellars beneath Ulcaster school to the east of Beregost, the second Cloakwood area and the cellars beneath Candlekeep. You can search for traps while still hiding, if you search for a few seconds then hide again before the character emerges from the shadows. If your 'Traps' skill is high enough to find a trap, then you can safely disarm it. However, some



Feel free to wander around people's homes – but don't expect them to be happy about it.

..ROOKIES?
COMMANDOS
PYRO
EIDOS

FOUL PLAY

BALDUR'S GATE

Ross is whipping himself into a feverish state of excitement over the announcement that there'll be a sequel to this sugar-coated-but-full-RPG-fat-cream-filling-adventure-cake of a game. We presume it'll be called *Baldur's Garden Path*. Or something. Anyway... some cheats, yes?

First find the Baldur.ini file and edit it. We would personally make a copy of it first, just in case something hilarious occurs, like you deleting it and ruining your game. Then simply find the [Game Options] tab and add the following line beneath it.

Cheats=1

Save the file, then run the game. To bring up the console hit CTRL-TAB, and enter any of the following cheats there. They are case sensitive, by the way.

Cheats:DrizztAttacks() – Creates a hostile Drizzt
Cheats:DrizztDefends() – Creates a friendly Drizzt
Cheats:Midas() – Provides you with 500 gold
Cheats:CowKill() – Creates a Cow-kill spell. Spooky
Cheats:CriticalItems() – Creates all critical items
Cheats:FirstAid() – Creates five healing potions, five neutralise poison potions and one stone to flesh scroll
Cheats:Hans() – If you get stuck, this moves you to a free adjacent area
Cheats:ExploreArea() – Marks entire area explored (like Clairvoyance spell)
Cheats:TheGreatGonzo() – Summons ten killer chickens who defend you at all cost

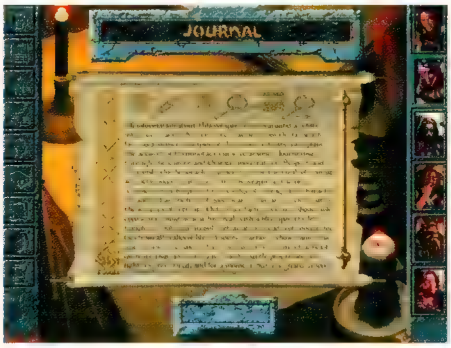
RETURN TO KRONDOR

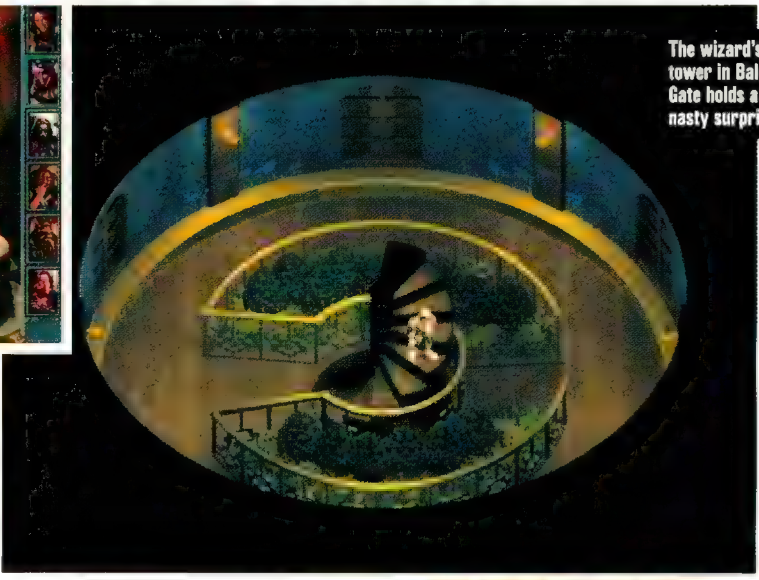
We do this all the time. Whenever we're drinking, no matter how we experiment with other beverages, we always return to Kronenburg. Sorry... misread that there.

Right. Find the RTKRONDOR.INI file (making a back-up copy of it first), then make sure the following two lines are in it.

[Console]
Console=1

When the game reaches the last navigation screen, press ALT-C to bring up the console prompt, which is a green dollar sign. Here you should type PYROMANIA, press ENTER then slam down on ALT-C to remove the prompt. This will let your mages have all spells and cast them without cost. Which is better than Gandalf, we'd imagine.




The wizard's tower in Baldur's Gate holds a few nasty surprises.

⮡ traps require a very high skill level and you may blunder into it even if you are looking. 'Pickpocket' is a fun skill, but it can be very inconvenient if you are caught, and you won't earn a huge amount of money using this skill.

Don't bother trying to keep everything you find. You won't get much money for ordinary weapons and armour at shops, but magical items should be kept at all costs. Give anything magical to your character with the highest Lore rating; if they can't identify it, and you have no Identify scrolls or spells, keep it and get it identified at a shop. You'll nearly always make a profit, or have some use for it yourself. If you find inventories filling up with stuff you'd like to keep (potions, scrolls, etc.) try storing them in cupboards and chests in empty rooms in Beregost or Baldur's Gate. Gems are only occasionally valuable; try to work out which ones will fetch high prices. Diamonds are the only obviously valuable stones.

Resting while out in the open is often essential, to re-learn spells and to recharge the batteries. Try to pick an area which did not previously have monsters in it, as they are likely to respawn and attack you if you make camp, disturbing your rest. This will also happen if you reload games repeatedly in an area. Before you rest, use up any healing spells you have left if anyone is injured, otherwise they will be wasted.

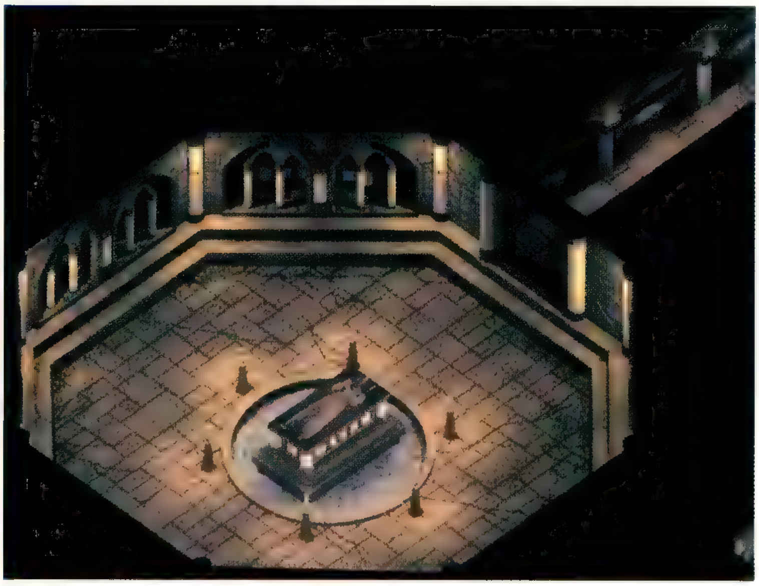
COMBAT TIPS

Combat is the most important aspect of the game; and rest assured you'll spend a lot of time doing it. It's the best way of earning experience points, and considerably more fun than just talking to people. You'll also get to pinch their money and possessions when you've run them through. Which is nice.

Perhaps *Baldur's Gate*'s best feature, the pause button allows you to contemplate tactics, give orders and even answer pesky phone calls at any time you wish. You could try not using it, but you wouldn't get very far, as you would have to control six characters at once and some of the battles require you to use all the resources you've got. If your Thief has already scouted the map, then you should know when combat is imminent. Try to keep your party in formation, as if a weaker party member is stranded they can be quickly set upon and killed.

As soon as combat is initiated (red circles indicate hostiles), pause and work out how you want to deal with the situation. Can your fighters handle it by themselves? Do you have enough arrows for your archers to join in, and do you want to equip magical projectiles? Do you want to cast spells? Offensive or defensive? Will your offensive spells pose any threat to your own party members? Bear in mind that using the Inventory screen while in combat will unpause the game, so try to have quickslot items organised all the time, and a good supply of projectiles in your quivers. You can, however, access any other menu screen (spell book, journal, etc.) during combat without the game becoming unpaused.

Don't be afraid to use potions and scrolls; they're not worth hoarding as you will always find more (and better ones) and they only clog up your inventory. Don't over-estimate your opponents, though, as some potions and scrolls are quite rare and should be saved for special occasions. Always have a good supply of healing and antidote potions; they can be stacked so you can have several in one quickslot. Strength potions are



THE EASTER EGG HUNT

The world of *Baldur's Gate* is so unutterably vast that you might imagine some areas to be empty or sparsely populated at best. But it is to the game's great credit that even the far-flung areas contain well-detailed and fun sub-quests. There are also some curious additions, or Easter Eggs, put in by bored programmers as a kind of signature. Look out for the tombstones in Nashkel, the talking chicken, the autograph-signing goblins, several mad mages, a dead cat and innumerable things to do and find in the houses of Beregost and Baldur's Gate. Oh, and see if you can stop yourself killing Noober...

```
ConsoleMoveToArea("AR3100")
```

particularly useful against powerful opponents, but they don't last too long, so only take them when combat is initiated. If an enemy is causing a lot of damage with a specific attack (e.g. fire, lightning, petrification), use scrolls to protect your main fighters from the attacks. See the magic section for more info on magic during combat.

MAGIC

In combat, or just prior to it, defensive spells such as Chant, Bless and Strength Of One are extremely useful when you're unsure what kind of offensive action would be appropriate. Haste is also excellent as it speeds up not only your party's movement, but their attacks as well. Spells like these which affect all the party require each member to be within a certain distance from the target, so make sure the party is together when casting it. Sanctuary is also useful, as it allows the caster to act like an invulnerable spotter.

To combat high-level enemy mages, always have a Dispel Magic available to negate spells such as Confusion and Fear, although casting Miscast Magic is a better way of crippling them. If you can get close, cast Minor Globe Of Invulnerability which prevents any magic being cast. This will leave them virtually helpless against attacks by your fighters. To tackle really tough fighters, the Monster Summoning spells or Animate Dead will slow them down while you rain arrows and more spells down on them.

Of the offensive spells, one of the most powerful and useful is Fireball. It has a long range and causes a wide radius of damage, but for this reason can also affect your own troops. It is particularly useful when you know an enemy is just out of visual range; they will sometimes work out where the fiery burning is coming from, though, and come over to investigate. Aganazzar's Scorcher is also a useful spell (so the dual-purpose Wand of Fire is a favourite) but it really demands that the caster be in the front line as the resulting two-foot corridor of flame can hurt your own team.

The lower-level spells all become more powerful when cast by a higher-level mage, so don't discount them. Chromatic Orb and Melf's Acid Arrow are two favourites, but there are several others which are equally useful. Larloch's Minor Drain is also useful, as it steals hit points temporarily and gives them to the caster. While spells such as Invisibility, Mirror Image and Dimension Door may sound attractive, in

⇨

...OR BOTH?
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FOUL PLAY

AGE OF EMPIRES: RISE OF ROME

In our rush to bring you the latest cheats for this expansion last month, we missed a couple. You may hate us for it, but we believe that if you look deep enough in your heart, you'll find it in yourself to forgive us. Go on. Look. No... not there. Just to the right. That's it.

photon man – Gives a space age man with suits and laser rifles
grantlinkspence – Turns animals into animal kings
big momma – A fast missile-equipped car
king arthur – Changes birds into dragons.
pow – A baby on a tricycle, who is jolly hard
stormbilly – A robot, who's quite hard
convert this – A priest with lightning conversion powers

And all the old cheats work too. They're in the guidelines sections of the cover CD. Go and have a nose.

TRESPASSER

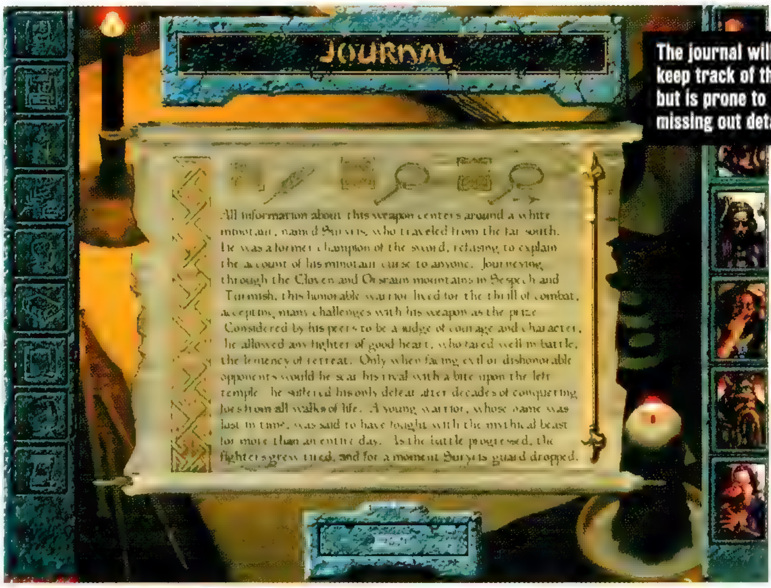
You might consider any cheats for this a good thing, as it'll let you get through the horrible floating-arm mess of a game as quick as possible so you never have to play it again. Alas we don't have any at the moment. Instead we have one of those fashionable Easter-egg things that may lessen your pain. We are praying for you.

Head towards the Research centre in town. When you reach the steps turn right. Walk straight towards the gate and the blockades. Go around them to get to the gate itself. Climb up the two beams that are locking it shut. Don't worry about falling off the other side, as it's at the edge of the play area. Balance on the wall, and move to the wall on the right. Walk along the wall towards the church and Hammond's house. Miles before you get anywhere, you'll see a niche in the top of the wall. Just walk over it to be transported to the hidden secret level thing, full of strange and wondrous Alice-in-Wonderland-esque pleasures.

⇨ practicality your mages will be under less threat than your warriors, leaving them free to use directly offensive spells. Invisibility Purge, however, is essential for revealing otherwise-invisible mages.

Healing spells are vital, and a Cleric or Druid is really essential to provide these. Use that character primarily as a healer, with all the first-level slots devoted to Cure Light Wounds. Cure Serious Wounds is a fourth-level spell, so you'll have to manage with the first-level spell for quite a while. Another non-combat spell you'll find useful is Clairvoyance, which allows you to see terrain and buildings above ground. This is particularly handy when in Baldur's Gate as you can then use the map to quickly identify buildings and work out where you are going.

Wands are extremely useful, and you should get into the habit of using them. They are pretty expensive, but allow you to repeatedly cast some very useful spells. The Fire Wand is very useful, as is Monster Summoning (some might say these two are essential). If you can master it, the Lightning Wand can be devastating against large groups, and the Wand of Fear can buy you a great deal of time and can often work against high-level enemies. Experiment with giving wands to different members of your party, as Rangers, Thieves and Clerics can all use certain wands.



The journal will keep track of things, but is prone to missing out details.

QUEST TIPS

The last thing I want to do here is to spoil the plot for you, which is why I haven't done a walkthrough. The story itself is pretty convoluted, and the chances are that you'll be in the dark until the end of the fifth chapter. Don't worry too much about taking your time over sub-quests, because there is very little that is time-specific. As a rough guide, if you take on 75% of the available sub-quests (you won't find them all) you can expect to take roughly 110 game days to complete the game.

You're unlikely to become completely stuck, as there is usually more than one way to negotiate any given problem. Likely difficulties are not being able to find a person or a place, or not being able to defeat a certain opponent. In the former case, it is a matter of exploring all available avenues. Get into the habit of making notes when talking to important people, or people who set quests, as your journal doesn't record everything and sometimes misses important details. If you do get truly stuck, though, write in to Q&A and we'll see what we can do. The game was supposed to ship with a comprehensive map; as you may have noticed, it doesn't. On our cover disc this month you will find two maps which are printed on these pages in small form; on the disc they are much larger and you will be able to read place names.

Under the streets of Baldur's Gate lies a torrid den of iniquity, like some of Bath's finer nightspots.

If you are continually unable to defeat a plot-specific opponent, the chances are you need to change your strategy. Try beefing up your fighters with spells and potions, or equipping some magical projectiles. Try incapacitating the target with Charm, Confusion, Slow, or Entangle. You may need to be sneaky, and try the scouting techniques described above with offensive spells such as Fireball and Monster Summoning to soften them up. Alternatively, you may be trying to run before you can walk, and you should go off and earn some more experience first.

The game has an experience cap, which means you can't earn more than 89,000 experience points. In practice, this means you won't advance beyond Level 7 in most classes (Level 8 for Thieves), so don't go mad trying to make your characters into superhuman machines. If you take on all the sub-quests you can find, and scour the maps for enemies and creatures, you should just about reach the experience cap, though you could probably complete the game with Level 6 characters. Weapons, spells and items will win the game for you; along with your skill, of course. Beard. PCG

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HINTS AND TIPS

GANGSTERS

Having trouble 'being' the Godfather? Come with us, as we put cotton wool in our cheeks and perform our finest Marlon Brando impressions.

By KIERON GILLEN

A bit of sensitive city-planning has given these apartments a lovely view.

You probably never realised that breaking the law was such a strategic and demanding task. You just thought that it would be driving around in vintage American cars, wearing a suit so sharp it could be used as a special weapon in *Quake III Arena* and smoking cigars the size of Zeppelins. It's not. It's jolly tricky indeed. But with these tips you should be the city's Don before you can say, "Why doesn't my stallion have a head?"

I STARTED OFF AS A RUNNER

During the first few weeks of game-time you should set yourself three priorities. These are making money, expanding territory and recruiting more hoods. All three are interrelated: as you gather cash you can hire increasing numbers of hoods. If you have more men, you can move in on new areas. And, completing the circle, the new areas will give you more cash. To get more hoods. To get new areas. To get more money (form an infinite loop and rush towards the end of civilisation as we know it). If you get behind, then you've put yourself in a very weak situation. So don't get behind.

Even though an all-out assault by your opponents is rare early in the game, hostile gangsters will almost certainly pass through your turf. This means you have to keep some of your troops behind for patrolling, or leave them at your office. Set up your teams accordingly. How? Read on.

WE WERE GOODFELLAS

Correct grouping of your hoods is of paramount importance. A fine Lieutenant will micromanage his team more efficiently, sending the best people for each job, so allowing more orders to be performed. The Lieutenant should have high values in intelligence and organisation, as well as in any skills that are relevant to the group's work. For example, if the team's going to be breaking the legs of unco-operative shopkeepers, he should have a decent intimidation level, and the team have at least four stars in the statistic.

You'll require three teams: an extortion team, a recruiting team and a security team. The first should have good intimidators, the second with high intelligence and the third with soaring firearm and stealth ratings. Before doling out the weapons, it's best to consider whether they actually require them. Patrols, hit-squads and those with four-star-plus firearm ratings are suitable, as they're able to deal with a fire-fight effectively. Incompetents might as well run rather than risk taking a slug. Especially if they're carrying a suitcase full of cash.

Vehicle purchasing is a balance of utility against cost. Unless you're well on the way to being Al Capone, it's probably pointless to give one to an extortion team who gets money from two just blocks away. Lieutenants will only use vehicles if

Isabel Frisco
Keep tabs on your less-experienced guys – sometimes they'll need you to help them out.

FOUL PLAY

KING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY

Let's just put it like this. It won't take you an eternity to finish this 3D adventure if you use this absolute host of cheats. In play press left-control, left-shift and 7 simultaneously. As if by magic the shopkeeper will appear... sorry, I mean a console. After entering your codes repeat the sequence to skip back to the game. If the code does not operate try them in all lower case letters.

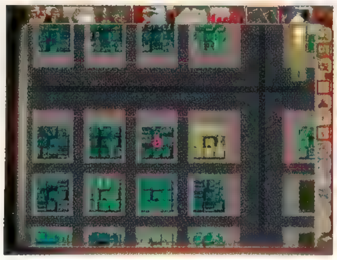
NoConCollide – Turns clipping off.
conCollide – Turns clipping back on.
setFirstPerson – Sets first-person view.
setThirdPerson – Guess. Really?
teleport – Click on the current world's map and Connor will be transported magically to that spot. Beware clicking on high mountain sides, as you'll probably be deposited in mid-air, fall and die.
debug – Will crash the game. Hurrah.
Bump – Nudges Connor a little bit forward and through walls.
Run – Presumably makes Connor move faster.
God – Makes Connor just about invulnerable to everything, bar very large falls and the river of death.
ungod – Return to normal.
set KQConner::reincarnate true – Makes Connor immediately return from the dead if he dies.
set KQConner::reincarnate false – Removes this fiendish boon.

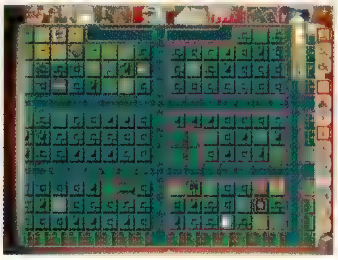
And what about some Easter Eggs?

ruth
jeffo
leslie
welch-girl
adam
oscar
rocket

Give <ITEM CODE FROM LIST BELOW> <HOW MANY>

Some of the items on the list Connor is never meant to have, so may crash the game. Equally items that you're never meant to have multiples of should just be entered once. And, as a typical side-effect of changes in development, some of the names don't give what you would expect. For example, the silver coins code actually gives gold coins, as originally the currency was planned to be in the less valuable precious metal. And, most importantly, this list is case sensitive. Enjoy yourself.





(Above and left) The main map allows you to overlay different features of the city to see how you're doing.

they think they'll benefit, so only give them to patrol teams who have to travel around regularly over considerable distances.

MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY

Your first orders should be extort, recruit and patrol to the applicable teams. When extorting, always target areas close to your office. These will be aware of your rep and so are easily manipulated. When recruiting, concentrate on the Labour Exchange and the Docks, as they contain more hoods than pool halls or gyms. If they're far away from your office, then equip the recruiter with a car.

Send the patrol anywhere in your territory, but avoid making it too large. When something goes down they may be too far away, then you'll be pushing up the daisies. My apologies for all this gangster speech, by the way. I'm just trying to get into character.

Any early conflict should be pretty coincidental, usually happening around the recruiting areas. You may consider accelerating time until you control an empire of 20 to 30 blocks. Of course, keep an eye open for combat messages. At the end of each week, check that your teams are up to strength and that you're in the black. Hire every single hood that's available. Even one-eye 'Syphilis' Jack can collect protection money. As your gang expands you'll find that other hoods become easier to recruit.

When each team is a honed killing machine, look at the city maps. Each opposing gang will also be expanding, and you'll be unaware of who controls what without exploring. Alternatively, you can recruit from enemy-controlled businesses and they'll tell you who controls their block. In about five weeks you should find yourself in a strong position if you follow these tactics. If you don't (erm), go play *Quake* or something instead. You're clearly ill-suited to a life of crime.

GODFATHER 2

Later in the game, contact (and violence) between gangs becomes more frequent through the increasing proximity of territories. You'll have to start using some new tactics. We'll tell you about them, with our special pin-stripe suit tips.

When you have sufficient 'wedge' then hire an accountant, who'll help distribute your ill gotten gains and so avoid the meddling FBI's attention. And always hire ⇨

Some say our new *Quake II* skins, above, have been inspired by *Gangsters*.

FOUL PLAY

MASK OF ETERNITY cont...

WEAPONS:

item0 = Dagger
item1 = SmallAx
item2 = BroadSword
item3 = Mace
item4 = LakeSword
item5 = SkelKingSword
item6 = BattleAx
item7 = WarHammer
item8 = Pike
item9 = LongSword
item10 = FlameSword
item11 = TempleSword
item12 = SmCrossbow
item13 = AzrielHammer
item14 = SmCpndCBow
item15 = ShortBow
item16 = LongBow
item17 = CrossBow
item18 = CpndCrossbow
item19 = FlameBow
item20 = IceCrossbow
item21 = WeeperEyes
item22 = DemonRocks
item23 = SkelBow
item24 = SimSlime
item25 = WitchBolt
item26 = Lava
item27 = Fists
item28 = [illegible]

ARMOUR:

item29 = LeatherGloves
item30 = LeatherArmor
item31 = LeatherBoots
item32 = ChainMailShirt
item33 = ChainMailGloves
item34 = ChainMailSuit

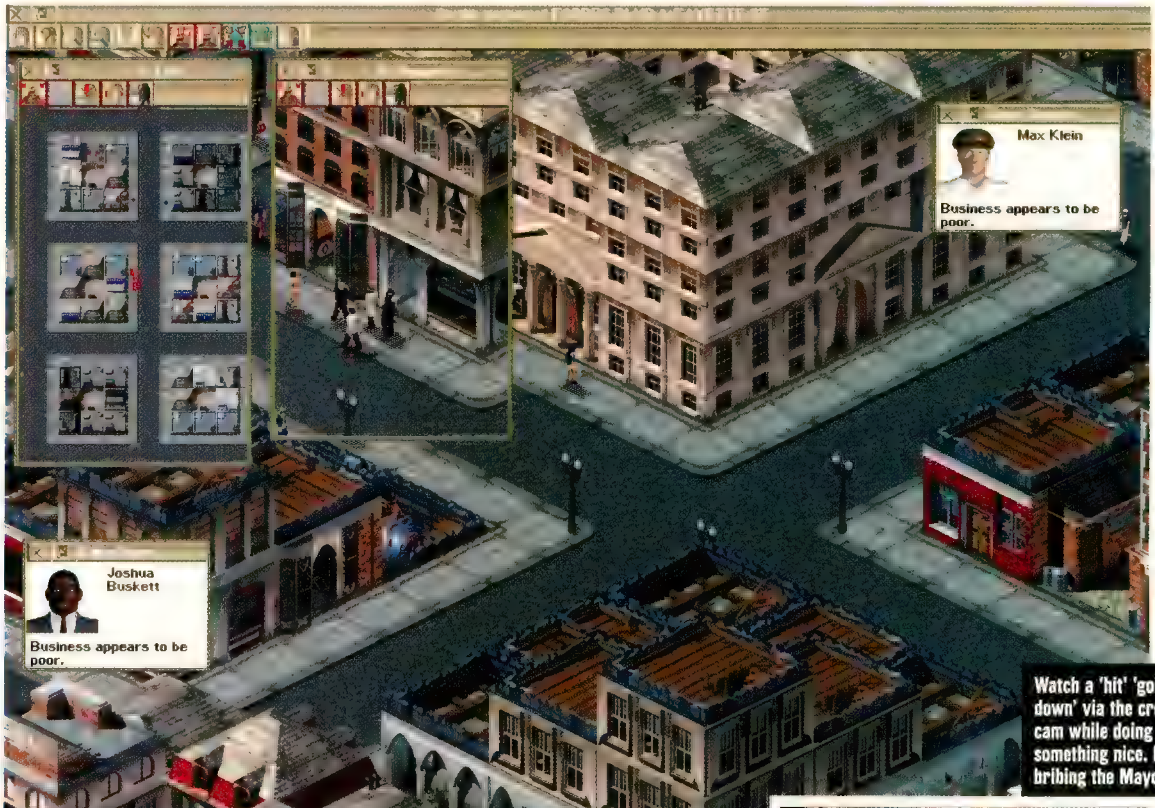
FOUL PLAY

MASK OF ETERNITY cont...

item35 = PlateMail
item36 = BronzePlate
item37 = FullArmor
item38 = Helmet
item39 = TempleArmor
item40 = GodArmor

HEALTH/MAGIC ITEMS
item41 = Mushroom
item42 = SacredWater
item43 = Crystal
item44 = ElixerOfLife
item45 = Clarity
item46 = Invisible
item47 = Invulnerable
item48 = Strength

INVENTORY ITEMS
item49 = RingOfDeadMan
item50 = Ashes
item51 = Candle
item52 = SilverCoins
item53 = MagicMap
item54 = RopeAndHook
item55 = RingOfLight
item56 = KeyToDeathMaze
item57 = Mold
item58 = BrokenShield
item59 = RustedBrokenShield
item60 = HearingHorn
item61 = AntiPoisonFlower
item62 = GreenMushroomPiece
item63 = Rock
item64 = IronLock
item65 = OakRoot
item66 = LodeStone
item67 = CrystalPyramid
item68 = BlackDiamond
item69 = AmberGlow
item70 = BasiliskTongue
item71 = FireGem
item72 = PipeCap1
item73 = PipeCap2
item74 = DragonKey
item75 = RockKey
item76 = BlueAdamant
item77 = JailKey
item78 = DecipheringAmulet
item79 = Paddle
item80 = Feather
item81 = GoodSkull
item82 = BadSkull
item83 = RoundKey
item84 = SquareKey
item85 = Ladle
item86 = hmhand
item87 = Mask1
item88 = Mask2
item89 = Mask3
item90 = Mask4
item91 = Mask5
item92 = Piece1
item93 = Piece2
item94 = Piece3
item95 = Piece4
item96 = Scroll
item97 = LadyBell
item98 = RustedLock
item99 = KeepKey
item100 = StoneOrder
item101 = MetalShaft
item102 = TruthKey
item103 = LightKey
item104 = OrderKey
item105 = MarbleTablets
item106 = MaskMedalion
item107 = Grail
item108 = Mask1B
item109 = Piece5
item110 = UniHorn
item111 = SpellPage
item112 = Mask1A
item113 = Piece1A

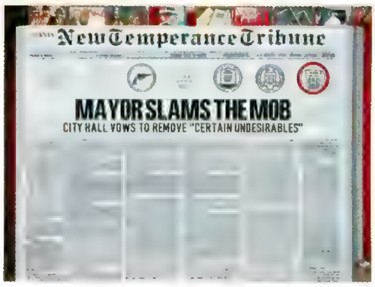

Max Klein

Business appears to be poor.

Joshua Buskett

Business appears to be poor.

Watch a 'hit' 'going down' via the crook-cam while doing something nice. Like bribing the Mayor.


New Temperance Tribune

MAYOR SLAMS THE MOB

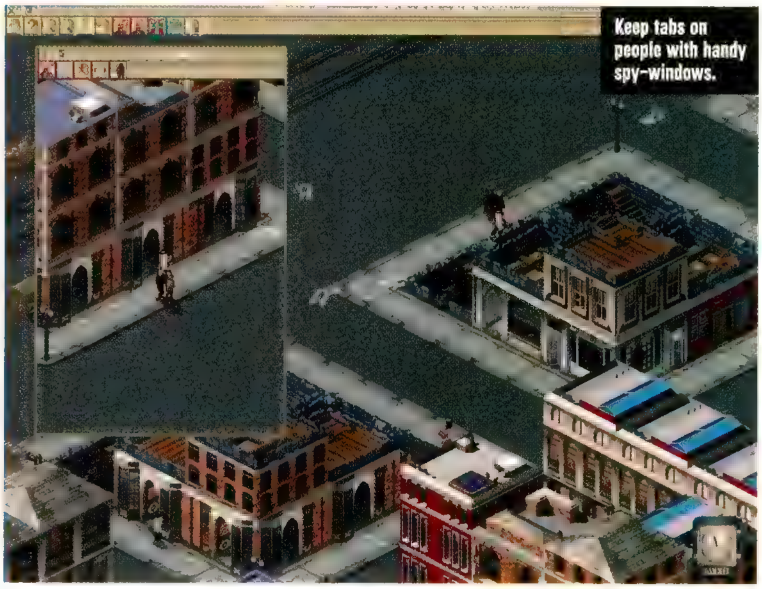
CITY HALL VOWS TO REMOVE "CERTAIN UNDESIRABLES"

⇨ the best, as a five star lawyer will launder much more money than a less skilled one. Equally, a suitably sleazy lawyer will help you keep out of prison and also keeps track of *exactly* how you're breaking the law, and how to avoid the cops.

At this stage you should consider investing in business. Start with legal business, as there's no risk of FBI raids. This'll also help in the laundering of your cash. The golden gangster rule is never let the ratio of illegal to legal income exceed 10 to 1, unless you have a quite excellent lawyer. You'll be inside on tax evasion before you know it. With your cover created, you can start to set up any illegal businesses your heart desires.

Remember to place them in the correct area of town, as putting a casino in a slum or a prize-fight uptown is counterproductive. Illegal businesses will almost always make more cash than their legal counterparts. This is, of course, why we bother risking imprisonment in the first place. And in real life too. *(Less of your anarchist philosophy, scamp. – Jim)*

The speakeasies, counterfeit presses and extra offices are special examples. Speakeasies, like the GAMER den, require a constant supply of liquor from a moonshine still. Counterfeit presses make no money themselves, but distribute large amounts of dirty cash to your legal businesses, who then launder it to the public and so increase their profits. The extra offices allow you to distribute where your hoods start the working week, as they'll begin at the one nearest the destination of their first order. And remember to keep the balance between legal and illegal money – if your accountant or some legitimate business disappears, re-evaluate your situation.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I'M GOING TO TORTURE YOU ANYWAY

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Your most regular legal foes are the Police, who patrol the city looking for crimes, investigating them and eating donuts. If a hood gets arrested, attempt to get the lawyer to bribe the DA to give you the names of witnesses and jurors. Bribe or intimidate these until they co-operate. If they don't... well, a concrete overcoat can stop ⇨

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FOUL PLAY

MASK OF ETERNITY cont...

item114 = DarkPyramid
item115 = ShardFuse
item116 = MarbleTablet1
item117 = MarbleTablet2
item118 = MarbleTablet3
item119 = GriffRoomKey
item120 = GriffCageKey
item121 = ClockShaft
item122 = HookDown
item123 = HookUp
item124 = SpinningMask
item125 = Orcbow
item126 = Spear
item127 = IceShard
item128 = IceLever
item129 = LucretoFire
item130 = Lucreto's sceptre

WEIRD THINGS
item130 = NoRanged
item131 = NoArmor
item132 = BirthdaySuit
item133 = Logo1
item134 = Logo2

HARDWAR

There's a wonderful moment in this '*Elite* for the Nineties' game's intro where the threatening cynical bloke looks into the camera and says, "There's a War out there (Dramatic pause) and it's not easy", which made me laugh lots. Sorry... you want a cheat don't you? Well run along with this, you scamp.

On the game launch screen select the control option, then reconfigure the joystick. Choose one of its buttons (any will do) and change its value to 'God Hanger'. When you begin the game press the applicable button and you'll pop over to a hangar packed full with weapons, items and cold hard cash. Which you can take, naturally.

DEADLOCK II

Good for keeping doors shut, these. And even better if you can have two, I'll imagine. And a moderately good game name, reminding me of a 2000 AD character I can't quite remember. Can anyone out there remember? Hmm? Oh yes. Cheats.

While the game is playing press CTRL and F12 and enter the codes in the prompt. They don't work in campaign games, though.

PILE IT ON – Add resources
Q40 – Complete all research
GREEBLIE – Finish research on the current project
WALL2WALL – Maximum population
LEO – Show resources/military units in enemy territories
BIGBRO – View any territory
CHARISMA – Make friends with all computer players
S-MART – Skirineen appears immediately
SQUISH – Win mission

➪ them ever being at the trial. If this fails, head to the judge and offer a suitable bribe. There are lots of ways of getting your men out of trouble, and it really comes down to how much time and effort you wish to spend getting your man on the right side of the bars.

The FBI is a little more serious. If you spot a lone agent on your turf, then it means that the FBI is suspicious and they're trying to locate your illegal businesses (or alternatively Agent Mulder has heard rumour of a mutant can of baked beans in the sewer system). At this point you have to choose between killing the agent, ignoring him or closing down your illicit businesses in the area. If you spot a car full of them then a raid is about to happen. There's little you can do, bar killing them or allowing the raid. If you choose the latter, you can always try and deal with the DA or judge later.

YOU GIVE ME NO RESPECT

Eventually you may decide to enter an election. You'll need a lawyer, masses of territory and even more money. If you reduce the amount of protection you collect each week then the happiness of your hapless protection-bound shop owners will increase, leading to more votes for you.

If you set up a teamsters building by one of the trade unions then you'll gain a share of the industrial vote, even if you don't own any of the heavy businesses. A 10% swing is not to be sniffed at. If another gangster enters the election, you should attempt to smear his reputation by performing crimes in his turf. For example, if you bomb a business in their area then the population will resent their protector. This'll lead to him losing votes. All hail democracy.

IF EVERY DRUG DEALER IN THIS ROOM DROPPED DEAD

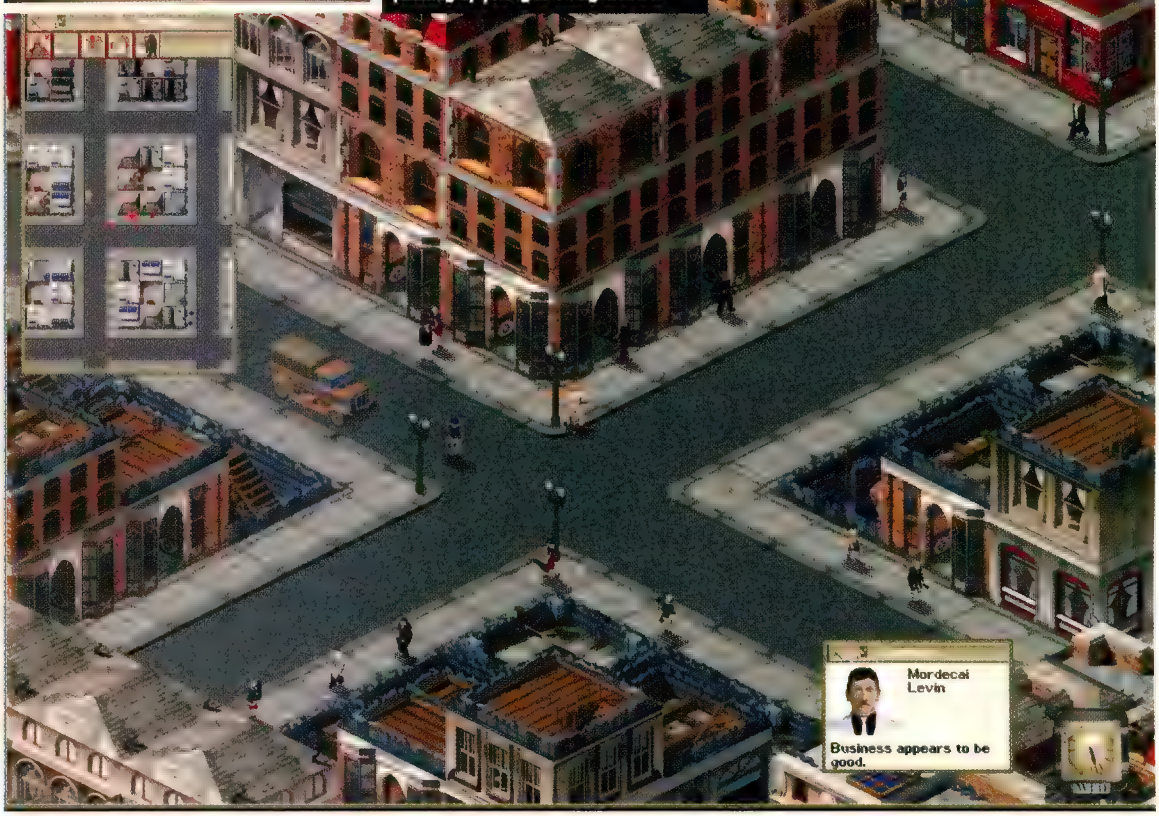
Unless you run for office or turn straight (and who wants to do that?), eventually you're going to have to mix it with the other gangs. First you have to find their offices by exploring the city. Narrow it down by using the newspaper and the recent events overlay on the city maps. High death concentrations generally occur on the border between two hostile gangs, and bombings indicate gangster-owned businesses.

Put on your Sherlock Holmes hat and attempt to deduce their position from these clues.

Your handy database of death-dealing devils keeps you informed.

When you explore, send as many people as possible. A wide area search is far better than nosing around individual blocks. Alternatively, you could kidnap a hood and try to make him squeal. To succeed you'll require first class hoods with sky-high ratings in intelligence, organisation, intimidation and stealth, with a soaring firearm rating to keep you alive as you move deep into enemy territory.

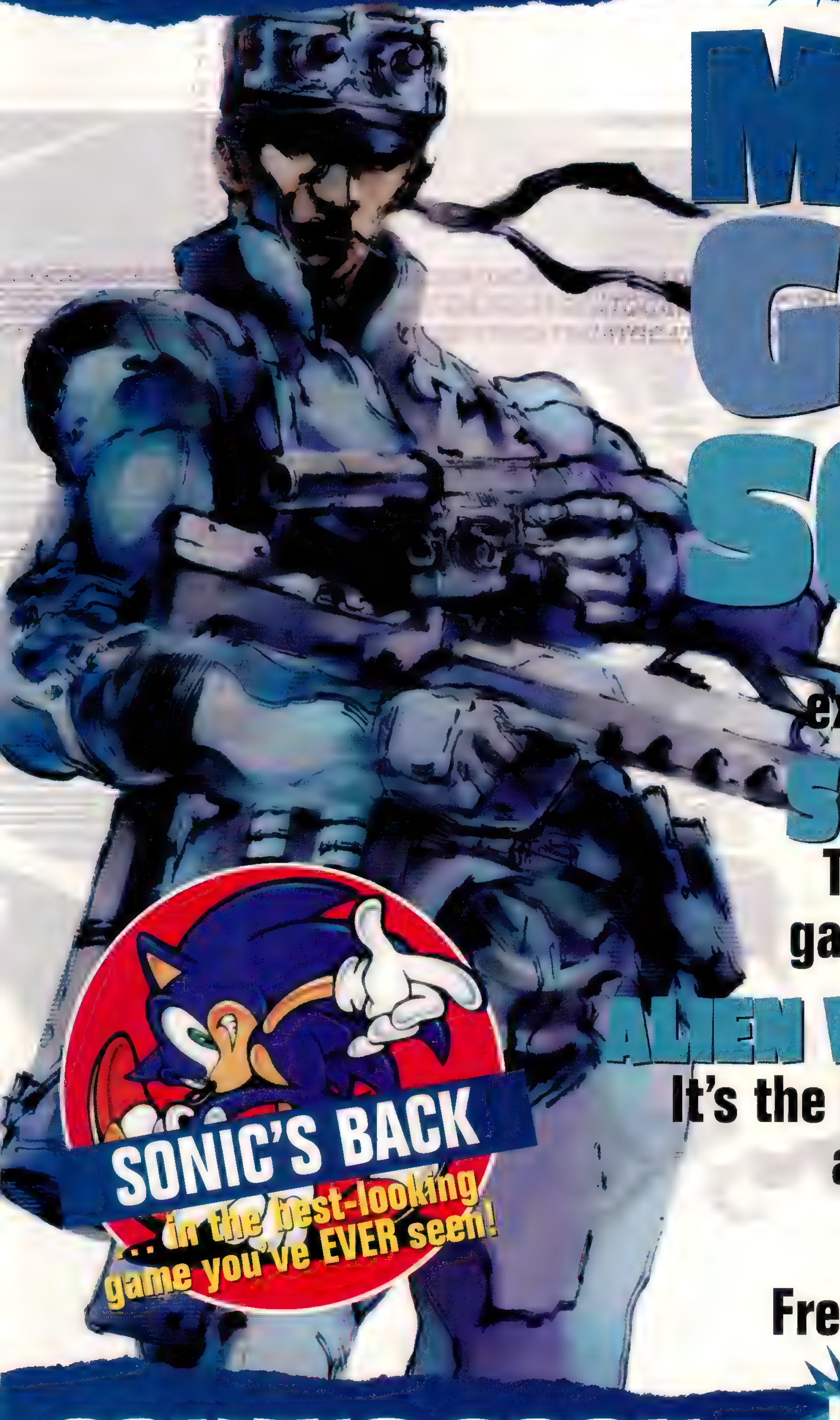
Once you've got hold of one, you'll receive a list of enemy businesses. You should investigate these and the area between them, and hopefully locate the enemy base. When you've found the office, killing the gang leaders is an option, but is expensive in terms of hoods, vehicles and weapons. You can attack a gang's businesses, increasing the FBI's suspicion about their boss, and so leading to his arrest. Personally, we favour the mass slaughter approach. But that probably tells you more about us than *Gangsters*. PCG



Ah, a happy inner-city area, ripe for the plucking by your gun-toting heavies.

Mordecai Levin

Business appears to be good.



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Q&A

This month Ross is off claiming his right to *prima nocte*. So I'm here to answer your questions. With my special words.

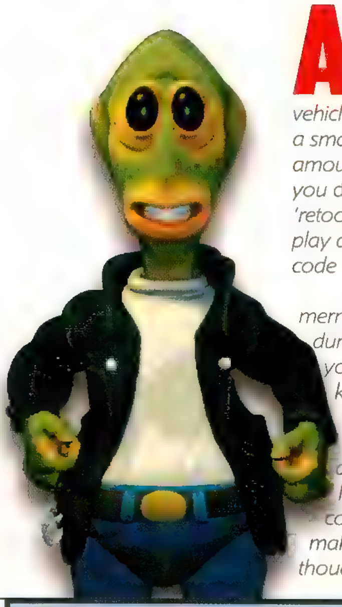
By KIERON GILLEN

He chose the dual rocket launchers to go with his wide lapels.

INTERSTATE '76

Q *Interstate '76* is driving me completely round the bend. *(Ah-ha-ha. – Kieron)* I know the *Interstate '76* cheat is 'knat' but I don't know which screen to type it in on. Please – I'm down on my bended knees – publish this letter and answer my questions.

Josh White, Dorset



A *You're quite correct in your knat equals cheat assumption. To activate it you merely have to enter it as the name of your vehicle variant. However, I would wager a small sum of money (up to the amount of three pounds Sterling) that you didn't know that by typing 'retocileh' in the same place you can play as a helicopter. Or that the knat code actually makes you a tank.*

And before I send you on your merry way, you can also cheat during the game. "How?" I hear you plead from your still-bended knees. Well, simply hold down CTRL and SHIFT then type 'getdown' for all the other cars to attack you (with your death leading to immediate mission completion), or 'wiggleburger' to make the screen wiggle. Who'd have thought it, eh?

THE FEEBLE FILES

Q I am stuck on Adventuresoft's *The Feeble Files*. I have the tokens and understand that I have to play the puzzle game to get more tokens; but this is simply too difficult. Also, I have had problems collecting the Wildcat Doll from the grabber machine. Is there any way to bypass this and continue the game? If there is no way out, could someone get past it and save the game afterwards, then send it to me on a disk? Pretty please with a cherry on top?

R. Hewitt, Bradford

A *Presumably, if there is no way out, then I wouldn't be able to get past it either, would I? And as for your suggestion of me sending you the saved game; you would have to make it worth my while (used fivers in a brown envelope would do the job).*

The good news is that you've caught me on a good day. The bad news is that you're on the right tracks, but you're just not trying hard enough. Keep bashing away on the puzzle game; you'll need at least 500 tokens. On the grabber machine, you don't say whether you've moved the fish yet or not. I'll assume you haven't: move the grabber to the far left (over the red fish). Move the grabber down, and release it halfway down. It will pick up the fish and reveal the cat beneath. Use the same technique to liberate the moggy.

THE DIG

Q I am stuck on *The Dig*, and there are a few questions I need to ask you, in your gaming wisdom. Please could you return the answers by e-mail?

1. What is the bait for the trap for the critter?
2. What is the use of the bracelet?
3. What do we do with the crevice?
4. What do we do with the sparks near the column in the nexus?

The Mourad Family, e-mail

OVER TO YOU...

Prime good Samaritan this month is the dashing Ricky Ohri who provided as many answers to others' plight as he could stick on one side of a sheet of A4 paper. He would have probably cured all the world's ills if he used both, but his printer ran out of ink. He receives the spanky Pace 3D Edge graphics card worth £99.

A Philip War wanted cheats for ***Constructor***. Run it through DOS then type either gadgets337 (for every gadget), gangster822 (to convert worker to gangster) or loans039 (to borrow any sum of money from bank). 'Desperate' Dan Gordon wanted cheats for ***Mech Commander***, so cheats he shall get. Type in these codes during the game: CTRL+ALT+W to win mission, 'osmium' for invincible Mechs or 'deadeye' for maximum gunnery skills. To help the 'Cheatmaster' at ***Beasts And Bumpkins***, type KNEELBEFOREME during the game then type G for unlimited gold, 0130 for more peasants or CTRL + F for the full map. Also, here are some level codes to type in at the difficulty screen for ***Conquest Earth*** – TRIFFIDS, JUPITER, BIG GREEN MONSTER, H G WELLS and TRIPOD.

Ricky Ohri, Wolverhampton

A Duncan Drummond needed help on ***GP2***. He can get an upgrade called GP2 edit from the Net at *http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/smyoung/gp2edit.htm* that has the facility to increase your engine

A *Much as I would love to spend all my working life answering every reader's gaming problems personally via e-mail, there are only so many hours in the day. Besides, many people are having the same problems with this game, so here are my solutions, for all the world to see.*

1. Use the ribcage as bait; you should find it along with the rod, hooked pole and dowel. Lure the critter from his hole and towards the trap.

2. Once the beastie is snared, use the bracelet on it and retrieve the ribcage.

3. As far as I can see, just take the blue rod.

4. Open the panel with the tusk. Examine, then use the wire on the dead panel and the sparks. Replace the panel and the door will open.

TOMB RAIDER 3

Q I recently completed *Tomb Raider 3*, and I got *('Flip.' – Jim)* all for my efforts. I would have thought I'd at least get something for the trouble. I've even started tapping in rude words to attempt to get her kit off, but when that failed I tried burning them off. All she does then is make a lovely groan. Should I give up or do what everyone else is doing?

Jason Packhard, Surrey

Grim secretly wanted to be in *Interstate '76.*

A *Yeah, I think you should do what everyone else is doing, i.e. stop fantasising over inanimate computer sprites. Or talking to real women. Or going to play football in the park (Time for your medication, Kieron. – Jim)*

GRIM FANDANGO

Q Receiving *Grim Fandango* on Christmas day pleased me immensely. Finding out that the PC GAMER team had written a complete playing guide for all of us stuck on the game in January's edition was even more pleasing. However, I'm still having difficulties. At the end of Year Two 'Rubacava' I can't seem to get Glottis to come on the ship with me. I have my union card and all, but he seems more content drinking and gambling. Please help me before I resort to the same.

Paul Minett, Bury St. Edmunds

A *Well, we're big fans of drinking and gambling here at PC GAMER (though in moderation and for purely social reasons, you understand) and we find that there's only one thing that'll stop us: running out of money. So, if I were to hazard a guess, that's the route to take.*

Head to your office and use the desk. You'll find the controls for the roulette system. When the red light is lit for the rightmost wheel, use the magnet to make the ball land on a different number. Bogan will shut down the club in a fit of pique, leading Glottis to get kicked out. Voilà!

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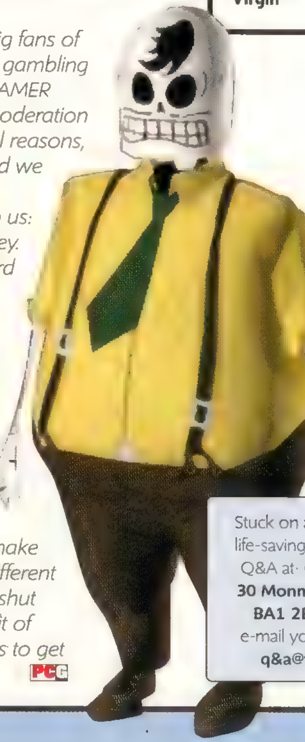
Most publishers offer their own games support service, so if you're stuck on one of their titles, it's always worth phoning them directly.

Acclaim	0171 344 5000
Activision	01895 456700 (ask for customer support)
EA and Origin	01753 546465
Eidos	0181 636 3000
Empire	0181 343 9143
Gremlin	0114 273 8601 (ask for customer support)
Infogrames	0891 244444
Interplay	01628 423666 (ask for customer support)
MicroProse	01454 893 900
Ocean	0161 839 0999
Psygnosis	0151 282 3333
Sierra	0118 920 9100
Take 2	01429 855046 (ask for customer support)
Virgin	0171 368 2266

WIN A PACE 3D CARD!

Each month the best Over To You reply will receive a top-notch Pace 3D Edge graphics accelerator card worth £99. So help your fellow man and yourself...

Write to: Over To You, PC GAMER,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW.
Or e-mail Q&A@futurenet.co.uk



Stuck on a gam In need of life-saving tips? Then write to Q&A at: **Q&A, PC GAMER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.** Alternatively, e-mail your desperation to: **q&a@futurenet.co.uk**

power enough to make a difference. I am not on the Net. *(Which begs the question how he found out. Erk and (indeed) eek. – Kieron)*

Martin Cooke, Trowbridge

A In response to Tim Larter's question in issue 65, about ***Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines***, use the split-screen mode to keep an eye on the soldier at the bottom of the plateau. Make the Green Beret crawl to the west of the soldier on the left and place the decoy. Crawl behind the soldier on the right and activate the decoy. You can now knife the soldier on the right and remove the body. Shut off the decoy. Move in behind the remaining soldier and take him out with the knife. Remove the body and pick up the decoy. Take out the soldier at the base of the plateau with the sniper when he is at the western end of his patrol. Good luck!

Jonathan Lee, Gloucestershire

Q I am stuck on ***Blade Runner***. I have investigated most things that are to do with the murder by the Rasputin guy, but I don't know what to do next.

Graham Russell, e-mail

Q I have been having problems with Eidos' ***Gangsters***. In particular, my hoods can never do their job of patrolling my territory because they always get picked up by the cops for killing enemy hoods for incursions into my territory. I can either let this happen or let my territory shrink. And I never seem to have enough cash.

Reginald Jones, South Wales

PC GAMER SYSTEMS

A power-hungry Simon gets stuck into the newest processors.

BEARDY BIT

Intel's new Pentium III processor includes a new set of instructions, designed to speed games in a similar way to MMX. Will the Katmai New Instructions have more success than AMD's 3D-Now!, which is only now attracting support? Or will Intel fall behind while other processor makers build up brand loyalty? Intel's competition is stiffer than ever, and the race to provide the best in 3D power is most definitely on.

So it's a particularly technical Systems this month, as I'll be trying to outline what makes these new processors tick.

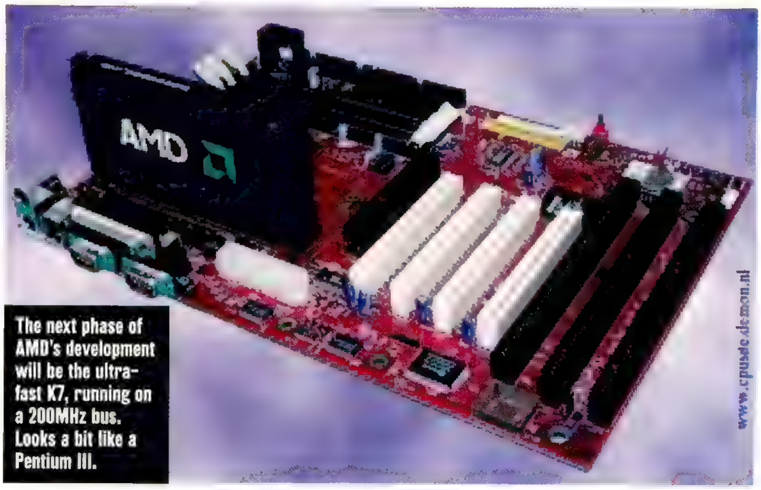
SIMON WILLIAMS

DON'T know about you, but I was quite content with Pentium IIs getting faster and faster and Celerons doing the same, for those who couldn't afford the PII. Developments never slow down much, though, and the Pentium III is just coming on-line. The Pentium III is a Pentium II with that subtle extra, the Katmai New Instructions (KNI). Katmai was Intel's codename for the Pentium III and is named after a volcano and/or bay in Alaska (I looked in my Encarta Atlas). Intel prefer to call them Streaming Single Instruction, Multiple Data – Floating Point instructions, or SIMD-FP, but I'll stick to KNI.

The extra instructions give the Pentium III a performance boost, like MMX did for earlier Pentium processors and like 3D-Now! has done for AMD's K6-2 chips. Yet how many 3D-Now! enabled games do you know? Will these new Katmai instructions fare any better? Indeed, are they worth the silicon they're printed on? And what do new instructions do, anyway?

A brief and simplistic resumé of how a processor works follows – anybody who already knows this stuff can skip to the next section.

A typical processor, like a Pentium II, consists of a series of 'registers' which can temporarily hold information in the form of numbers while they're added together, multiplied by each other or whatever. The numbers come from memory and the results of the calculations are returned there. Although they're only numbers, they essentially form the guts of all the programs that run on a PC.



The next phase of AMD's development will be the ultra-fast K7, running on a 200MHz bus. Looks a bit like a Pentium III.

Operations, like "multiply the number in one register by the number in another register and stick the result in a third" are delivered by a program to the processor as instructions. Every processor understands a lot of different instructions, but the number and complexity of them depends on the type of chip. For example, an MMX processor understands an extra 57 instructions over a classic Pentium. AMD's 3D-Now! processor understands an extra 21 over an MMX chip and now there are another 71 in the KNI of the new Pentium III.

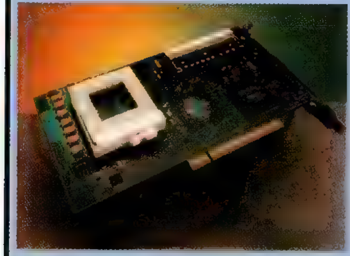
MMX, which Intel deny stands for MultiMedia eXtensions, was designed to speed up tasks often needed in multimedia programs and games. Tasks that could be done in software – slowly – using a series of instructions without MMX, can often be done in hardware – quickly – using a single instruction from the MMX instruction set.

BIG IN 3D

MMX helped multimedia programs, but the main thrust of both 3DNow! and KNI instruction sets is 3D. The extra computation needed to create and render 3D scenes requires a lot of work in the floating point registers of a processor. There are two types of arithmetic used in programs: integer and floating point. Simply put, integer arithmetic deals only with whole numbers (1, 11, 2,187, -64,587) while floating point handles decimals (1.01,

⇨

DOWN BELOW Hot new widgets to stick under the bonnet of your PC.



The Eclipse PCI could be the first five-minute upgrade which really brings your PC into the late Nineties. I hope to have one to test very soon now.

Into Eclipse

Those struggling with early Pentium PCs, or even some later 486s, will be keen to hear of Evergreen's latest upgrade option. Simple to install and not requiring you to tinker with your BIOS, the Eclipse PCI card is a little different from the upgrade processors the company has sold before, as it fits in a single PCI slot and contains memory and BIOS, as well as a complete processor.

When plugged into an old machine, the Eclipse card works in collaboration with the PC's own BIOS, and takes control of the machine at start-up. From then on, all work is done from the card, so its processor, not the old, slow one, governs how fast your PC then works. It does this bit of wizardry without you having to change anything at all in the original machine – no new BIOS, no system driver – or so Evergreen claims.

As a bonus, because the card contains its own BIOS, a brand new one, it's fully Year 2000-compatible and removes the worry of unsightly crashes on January 1st. There will be a range of Eclipse cards, from unpopulated boards to versions including AMD K6-2 or Celeron 370-pin processors, with 64Mb of memory. The 64Mb Celeron 333 version is slated to cost around £410.

That sounds like quite a lot to me. You could get a new system board, processor and memory for that, but this product is aimed at those who don't trust themselves with a heavyweight upgrade. This is a real plug 'n' go solution for those who need more processing power. For more information, call Evergreen on 01793 601300.

PENTIUM II REVIEW

Myrica-A

■ Supplier **Fujitsu** ■ Contact **01344 475555** ■ Price **£899** ■ Processor **400MHz AMD K6-2** ■ Secondary cache **512K** ■ Memory **64Mb (768Mb max)** ■ Hard drive **9.4Gb, IBM** ■ CD-ROM **32-speed, LG** ■ Graphics card **8Mb ATI Xpert 98** ■ Monitor **17-inch Fujitsu** ■ Other bits **Floppy, 56K modem, Aztech sound card, speakers** ■ Bundled software **Windows 98, Works, Word, Publisher, Encarta, ViaVoice, CART Racing, vouchers for up to eight more titles.**

Fujitsu have produced a great all-in system for Tesco and at under £900 you get a good software suite as well as up-to-date hardware.

Next time you're down the supermarket, why not pop a Fujitsu PC into your shopping trolley? For the last few months, Tesco have been offering PCs among the organic potatoes and cans of ginger beer. The company sells just one model, but that model changes from month to month, under a process of continuous upgrade.

The latest model is the Myrica-A, which is powered by an AMD K6-2 running at 400MHz. It has 64Mb of memory and a 9.41Gb hard drive so there's little to worry about on the performance front.

Yes, it could do with a Voodoo card of some sort, but in most other respects it's a near-perfect games playing PC. It now comes with a 17-inch monitor, one of Fujitsu's own badged units, which gives a good display and is easy to adjust. The speakers are a bit small and lack-lustre but are adequate for most games. The keyboard includes extra keys for controlling the CD, sound control and for accessing the Internet, via the standard internal 56K modem.

> **"The real strength of the machine is its software... you can tailor the final bundle to your interests."**

The real strength of the machine is its software bundle. The core of it is from Microsoft and includes Works, which is strengthened by Word and Publisher. The Encarta Encyclopedia is in there and a copy of *CART Racing*. There's ViaVoice speech recognition and a headset to use it with. And there are vouchers to select up to eight more titles from a good range Fujitsu is offering. You can also tailor the final bundle to your interests.

Also included is home installation, where the system is set up and the software installed for you before you start. This, plus a year's on-site warranty, should bring some piece of mind. For under £900 all in, this is a capable PC, well balanced and the basis of a great home system.

PC GAMER

Quality kit with some excellent software – and nicely priced.

85%

LAST MONTH

A quick note to those of you who have been trying to get hold of Lexon to order last month's award-winning PC. It appears that while they can design cracking systems at knock-down prices, they haven't bothered to get a decent phone system installed. So all we can say is keep trying to get through on 0181 667 1173 or take your money elsewhere.

11.2762, 2,187.2, -64587.001) you get the idea. Floating point calculations are harder to do and usually take longer, which is why many processors have special arithmetic units specifically designed to do them, called Floating Point Units, or FPUs.

AMD's 3DNow! instructions, which are mainly floating point, were designed so that they could be used by program developers with the minimum of change to existing code. Since AMD chips only hold a small part of the PC market – though it's growing every day – the company wanted to encourage support for 3DNow! by making it easy to incorporate into 3D programs.

The downside of this ease of use is that the new 3DNow! calculations are performed in the same processor registers as 'regular' floating point and MMX instructions. For a processor to perform a 3DNow! instruction it has to empty out the registers of any previous numbers first – which takes time.

Even so, programs written to take full advantage of 3DNow! can run up to 50 per cent faster than non-3DNow! versions. Measured in Mega FLoating point OPerations per Second (MFLOPS), a 300MHz K6-2 can theoretically reach around 1.2MFLOPS. In practice, though, because of all the loading and unloading of registers, it's more likely to hit an average of around 0.3-0.4MFLOPS in current games. A 300MHz Pentium II would be more likely to hit around 0.2MFLOPS under the same conditions.

Patches you may have already downloaded and run on your K6-2 powered PC, such as the *Quake II* patch, only take advantage of 3DNow! in the graphics rendering. The gameplay and artificial intelligence in the game doesn't use it at all and couldn't without the game being re-written from the ground up. You're likely to see more games written from scratch for 3DNow! this year, and then you'll see its full potential.

KATMAI ERUPTS

Intel have taken the same approach as AMD with the SIMD instructions in KNI. Both technologies aim to perform the same operations on several sets of numbers at once. Since there are so many repeated instructions in typical 3D programs such as games, the idea of using the same instruction over and over again with different data can save a great deal of time.

Intel have gone further than AMD, though, in one important area. The company has incorporated a separate set of registers in the design of the Pentium III, so that it can execute KNI instructions at the same time as regular floating point or MMX instructions. This extra bit of hardware should increase the overall speed at which the new processor can run all kinds of 3D programs. Speeds of up to 2,000MFLOPS have been quoted by Intel for the 500MHz Pentium III.

Intel's new Pentium III logo, announced over a month before the chip itself. Don't expect it to look any different from Pentium II, though.

The range of instructions in the KNI set is also more varied than in 3DNow!, which gives developers much more scope, once they decide to incorporate the instructions in their code. This isn't a trivial adjustment, though, as their proprietary libraries of graphics routines for rendering, 3D creation and other aspects of gaming have to be re-written to use them.

Given the marketing clout Intel can command, though, there's little doubt that all the important games companies will eventually fall in line. This may not be for a year or two, though, as it'll take that long for Pentium IIIs to make up a big enough part of the market.

It could well take longer for KNI to become adopted than MMX, as it won't be available in every new Intel processor. Celeron chips won't be using the KNI set for some time – it hasn't been shown on Intel's roadmap yet. Since the Celeron is aimed specifically at the low-cost section of the market – sub £700 or so – which is also primarily the home market, games developers may not see it as essential from day one to make use of it.

The same hasn't been true with 3DNow!, however, as the K6-2 is very definitely a budget part. So, oddly, even the much larger numbers of Intel parts may not benefit adoption of KNI, as fewer Pentium IIIs will actually be used for games.

PENT UP

Pentium IIIs, which should have started appearing by the time you read this, will be broadly compatible with the Pentium IIs that have gone before, except that the supply voltage will be different. Recent system boards should cope with this, but older ones may have difficulties.

Mobile
AMD
K6-2
3DNow!
AMD

AMD's K6-2 chip, this one in its new mobile form, has had 3D acceleration for nine months.

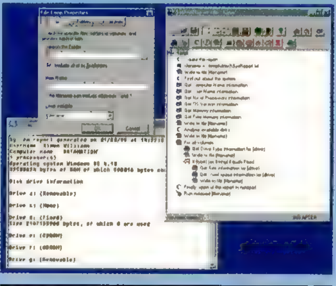
DOWN BELOW

A batch of clams

Under DOS, if you wanted to knock up a quick routine to back up important files or set up a machine to run a particular game, chances were you could do it in the DOS batch language. Under Windows, things aren't as easy, particularly if you want to run such a file in Windows, rather than in a DOS box. Also, batch file commands are pretty arcane and hark back to the days before graphical user interfaces.

Clam, a shareware program from the Milton Keynes-based Morello software, addresses both these problems. It's a small, efficient scripting language, which enables you to run up cheap and cheerful programs without ever having to write a line of code yourself. Instead, you pick all the commands and parameters from comforting Windows dialogues.

You can create Windows info boxes and use loop and conditional structures the DOS batch language never supported. Registration is just $25, but you'll need to register, as the shareware version won't save, which rather goes against the principle of try-before-you-buy. Even so, Clam is well worth looking into, if you want to be able to automate tasks which take a while to do by hand.



The Clam editor is easy to use and many programming jobs can be built up using handy dialogues like this.

Cost may be key

The back-up/storage market is becoming flooded. As well as the LS-120 Superdisk, the Zip drive and the new HiFD drive, there's a fourth device due for release in the next month or two. The 144Mb UHD 144 drive from US company Caleb *(www.caleb-bldr.com)* is said to be faster than any of the others, still backwardly compatible and should be easy to fit. Its biggest advantage,

Pentium IIIs will initially be built using a 0.25 micron architecture, though later in the year Intel will be moving to 0.18 micron. At this stage, the company will also be pushing up the bus speed from 100MHz to 133MHz and beyond.

The Pentium III will be introduced at 450MHz and 500MHz, but versions at up to 633MHz are expected by the end of the year. Prices will start at around $750 in quantities of 1,000, so the Pentium III isn't going to be seen in budget machines, at least anywhere near the start of its life.

There are other chips on the horizon too, which will distort the picture further. AMD's K6-3, also known as Sharptooth, will have on-chip cache running at the chip's clock speed, like the Celeron. Gateway, a staunch Intel client up until now, have committed to the new AMD processor, and will be offering inexpensive machines using it. Further down the line is the K7, a big, fast beast with a 200MHz memory bus.

The K7 will offer 3DNow!, but will also use a different bus architecture, which means system board makers will have to design boards specifically for it. AMD have always been able to cosy in with Cyrix and IDT before, encouraging board makers by sharing Socket 7 with MII and C6 chips. Judging by the inroads AMD are currently making, though, it may not be hard for the company to swing board makers to the new design – probably around the end of the year.

TIME LAGS

Being the market leader, Intel can afford to make bigger changes to the internal structure of their chips and still take program developers and the buying public with them. The Katmai New Instructions in Pentium III chips are more far-reaching and potentially faster than those in AMD's 3DNow! They're also newer, though, and it'll take longer for you to see games taking full advantage of KNI than 3DNow!. For example, Microsoft's DirectX 6 is fully 3DNow! aware, while you'll have to wait for version 7 before any DirectX game can take advantage of KNI. And you can bet AMD won't be sitting around waiting for KNI to kill 3DNow!...

HELP!

ABORT, RETRY, FAIL...

Foxed by your PC's foibles? Send in your woes and Simon will sort you out. Well, not all of you, obviously.

Q:> My keyboard has grown a mind of its own! My keys have decided to 'swap places' as it were, while others have ceased to operate! For example, my '@' key and '"' have swapped places, while my '£' key comes up with '#' and my '#' key comes up with '|'! The list goes on! I thought it may be the keyboard itself, so I went out and spent 20 quid on a spanking new Logitech one! The problem persists, however! Is it my motherboard, drivers, what?

Dave Ritchie, via e-mail

A:> *Sounds to me like your keyboard language setting has been changed from UK to US. Go to Control Panel/Keyboard/Language and check it reads English (British). Also check Control Panel/Regional Settings reads English (United Kingdom).*

Q:> I would like to ask you about network cards. I am getting a network together with my friend... we already have a serial link, but not many games use it and of those that do, few actually work. So am I getting a LAN. The distance will be probably about 30 metres, and I am thinking of getting a 10Mb/sec card. I am just enquiring whether there is anything else I should know. The cards cost £32 each, the 30m wire costs £10. I heard there might be a starter kit or something you need. Do you know if there are any good applications for the network?

Sean O'Sullivan, via e-mail

A:> *The simplest network you can put together is to fit 10Base 2 network cards into both PCs and to connect a length of cable between them. 10Base 2 is the type of network which uses co-axial cable and doesn't need a hub. A hub is a box of tricks which is useful if you're connecting three or more PCs together.*

You can pick up 10Base 2 network cards (also called NE2000 cards) for around £15 each through any good mail order company. They should each come with a small T-shaped connector which fits on the back of the card. The cable fits to one arm of the T and a small metal device, called a terminator – which you'll need to buy separately – must be fitted to the other arm of each connector.

Windows should spot your new network and install appropriate drivers automatically, so have the Windows CD handy. As for good programs, nearly all multi-player games will work with your new set-up – the guys in the office tell me something called Half-Life *is quite good - I'm a* Minesweeper *man myself. Best of luck.*

Q:> I am seriously considering purchasing the Diamond Supra Express 56K Pro modem. I would like to purchase the internal version for a number of reasons, i.e. saving on desk space and a considerable saving of £25. Also, I've been informed that an internal modem is slightly faster than an external modem. Could you please tell me if this is the case? Is the internal one a cut-down version of the external one?

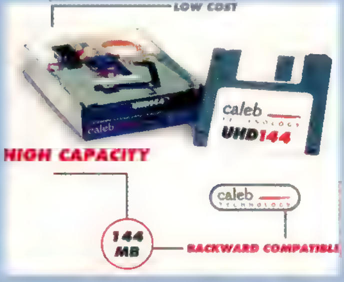
A Smith, via e-mail

A:> *Internal and external versions of modems are the same electronics. The price difference is accounted for by the case of the external device and the fact that it normally needs a separate power supply. Internal modems normally work faster than external ones, since they're not restricted by the speed of the serial port which the external device connects to the PC through.*

Q:> Just recently my computer's been behaving a bit erratically. Things crashing that never used to, miscellaneous error messages, things not running or saying there isn't enough memory when obviously there is (I have 64Mb of RAM). One minute it's fine, then Windows throws a wobbly and freezes up. Sometimes I can just carry on, but usually I have to reset, which fixes it. Is there any way of checking the system over? I've tried reinstalling Windows 98 but to no avail. I haven't changed any settings or added/removed any hardware. I've checked it over with two virus checkers and I don't think it's a virus, just a bit of a sniffle.

Darren Lusty, via e-mail

A:> *That's annoying. You've already tried just about all the remedies I would have suggested. It sounds like a driver problem somewhere in Windows. When you re-installed, did you back-up all essentials and start with a clean hard drive? I know it's a pain, but from my experience, unless you remove the miscreant version completely, problems like this can somehow survive a re-installation and start making mischief again.*



If they can make enough drives and sell them cheap, Caleb might beat Iomega, iMation and Sony with its UHD144.

though, may well be price. Rumoured to cost around £47 when launched, it will undercut even the SuperDisk, which is currently the only drive manufacturers are considering using as a replacement for the ubiquitous floppy. Cost may well win out over capacity as the key factor in adopting new storage technology.

A thousand Gigasounds

Claims for sound cards get more loopy as the months go by. This natty little card from Datek, based around a Yamaha XG synthesiser and Aureal's A3D Surround Sound Positional Audio, has an RRP of £64 and will probably be available mail-order for a good deal less than this. Rage, LucasArts, Criterion, Ubi Soft and Activision are already supporting the A3D system, which gives it a good start.

Even so, describing the TeraSound as "almost undoubtedly the most sound card available anywhere" is either a rather silly superlative or needs another word casually inserted between 'most' and 'sound'. Possible candidates are 'disturbing', 'unnerving', 'green' or 'over-hyped'.

According to the PR photograph, when you fit a TeraSound card to your PC small carnivorous giraffes leap from the screen and try to bite your head off. Mental.

THE MONEY

Your disposable income disposed of.

ACTION REPLAY
Datel 01785 810814
£30
www.datel.co.uk

HERE'S something that's been around since at least the C64 days. The Action Replay's a little black box that plugs into the parallel port (there's a through connector, helpfully) and hacks games for you. Run the driver program, click on the game name, select your cheat (infinite lives, extra ammo, that sort of thing) and load the game itself. "POKEs for the 21st century," you'll be saying wisely, and you're right.

Oddly, you can't look for any codes yourself by typing in wildly improbable strings of numbers (as you could with all the other Action Replays). Instead you have to download sets from Datel. Presumably this is because the wrong POKE could set your PC alight or something, but it still feels a bit cheap. (You get codes for 20 games thrown in. Coo, eh? No, not really.)

The big problem with all this, of course, is that perhaps five PC games in the entire world don't have built-in, easier to use cheats. The Action Replay's more flexible, and clean and simple, but, to be honest, I can't see the point of a PC one.

50%

PC WASHING MACHINE
First Class Returns 010 9723 971 2484
(Tel Aviv)
£60 (£40 basic kit)

AN astonishingly bizarre invention, though probably not as astonishing as the fact it works. A straggling descendant of all those non-starter 1980s house-control kits such as The Red Box, the PC Washing Machine claims to manage your laundry more efficiently, mixing detergent and fabric softener to an exactly effective formula according to an upgradeable database of loads. The PC widget plugs into the parallel port (stupidly, no through connector) and there are two kits for the washing machine end: the basic one's a bit clunky and mechanical, fitting over the programme dial and essentially acting as a timer. The interesting one's a snazzy-looking emitter and gives full control over the wash by interfering with the control chip.

The software's no prob to use, but you'll need to bring the PC to your washing machine if you don't have a long enough wire (but don't put it on top, as the spin cycle can make the hard drive skip). Lord knows who'd buy this, and I couldn't honestly see the difference it made to my socks, but full marks for lunatic ingenuity.

73%

SMART KEYBOARD
Magnate 0151 242 9500
£130
www.magnatedistribution.com

THIS completely bendy rubber keyboard ("As Flexible As You" runs the ad slogan, next to a photo of the keyboard rolled up like a carpet, so perhaps more "As Flexible As A Sheet Of Rubber" then) is the mutant child of good science and bad science. It really does work – you can twist it up, run it under the tap, hang it over the line and beat it with a broom and throw it for the dog to fetch, and it'll still do nothing more than leave your hands smelling powerfully of rubber for minutes. "The Speccy keyboard for the 21st century," you'll be saying wisely, and you're right. It's apparently proof against temperatures between 70 celsius and minus 20. Magnate say it would be ideal for, say, a smelting works, although neglect to mention how you'd stop the PC your bendy keyboard's connected to from becoming slag on your lap.

Shame it has such a horrible 'feel' and feels so horrible really. Fun for flapping around like a wobble-board to watch it type gibberish all over the screen BY ITSELF, but, I mean, *really*.

30%

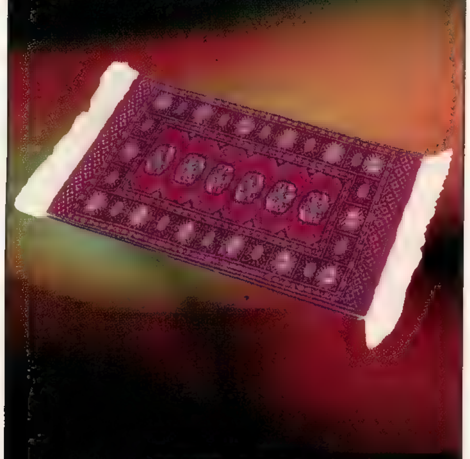
PIT

WHAT THE HECK?

As the world's best-selling PC games mag, PC GAMER gets sent all the prime tat. Er, unorthodox accessories. Usually it gets stuffed in the back cupboard, where occasionally it'll burst the lock and fall out on a staff writer, but roughly annually we clear everything out and review the least tatty bits. Um, most interesting. Not to worry, readers, there'll be more nondescript shiny boxes to choose between next month.

Aching for an oddball peripheral? Want to play *Half-Life* by wiggling your head? No, thought not. Oh, all right then.

By JONATHAN NASH



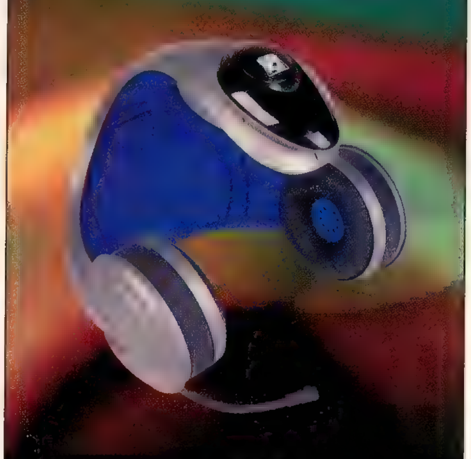
MOUSE RUG

Fuse On
01376 500566
£13

WHEN the history of the universe comes to be written, probably all on the last two days before the deadline, a special place will have to be found for the Mouse Rug. It's a square of carpet, you see, with a rubbered bottom, and it acts as a mouse mat. Quite a small mouse mat, in fact, but an adorably sweet one. Both ends are fringed (so it looks like a tiny flying carpet) and the pattern's proportionally reduced. The tactile quality is excellent, and the rolling area gives plenty of friction. There were no kinks in the weft, and the sample mouse travelled smoothly and uniformly across the carpet face. The rubber bottom also provides tremendous grip.

Strategically left in a prominent desk position, the Mouse Carpet was observed to attract interested or amused comments in a roughly 58-42 split with expressions of dismay or braying. Putting the mat in the centre of a tiled kitchen floor as if a real carpet elicited an approval rating of 8.2, and, and, and, and... *Thirteen pounds*. Gosh.

80%



UR GEAR

Video Computer SPA
0171 821 5811
£40

BACK once again... not so much the Renegade Master. Rather, the UR Gear which we donned for inclusion in our free Play Faster supplement way back in March '98. It's now receiving a second commercial push, which is the perfect opportunity for you to investigate its unique brand of game input.

It's a controller that's designed to be used not only as a joystick substitute (albeit a head-mounted one), but also adds enjoyment to certain genres of games. Flight sims fans in particular are going to lap it up – lending, as it does, the ability to control a virtual cockpit merely by rotating or nodding your head in the desired direction. It sounds superfluous to a setup involving joystick, mouse and keyboard, although there's a heightened sense of realism involved with having to move your head in order to search the skies for enemy aircraft. Driving games too can benefit from its movement-based input (which relies on an infra-red receiver), allowing you to literally lean into corners while riding a Superbike. A novelty that's definitely worth investigating.

80%

KEY FLIP PINBALL KEYBOARD

Keyline
Contact: Blue Egg, 26 Upper Street,
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60% of this is great. It's a standard keyboard, but with two green buttons on the sides at the top, and two wrist pad-style curvy bits along the bottom. The buttons act as flippers, the pads as nudges. The pack includes a sample *Breakout* game (rubbishly useless, it includes power-ups that freeze your bat) and *Pro Pinball Timeshock*, which is excellent. The keyboard itself is solid enough, if a bit clicketty. A switch maps the extra pinbally bits to various keys.

The great 60% is the buttons. They lie naturally under your flipper fingers, and feel pleasantly springy. Playing *Timeshock*, I felt that this was a novelty controller I'd bother plugging in for the appropriate games. But tragically the nudge pads are terrible. In real pinball you bang the table about: a lateral motion. Here, the nudge pads are just large, insensitive buttons, which you have to thump down on with the heel of your hand. It feels terrible, but then I suppose that mercury tilt switches wouldn't have worked either. (That's another thing – they call it tilting instead of nudging. Tchoh.)

60%

WIN!

A PC, A BIG TV, A VIDEO, AND LOADS MORE!

UNLESS you're one of that unholy breed who reads PC GAMER backwards, you should, by now, have noticed our world exclusive review of *Aliens vs Predator*. If not, flick there now, and join me back here once you've digested its finer points...

... Ah, hello again. Enjoy that did you? Good. Now you'll understand why Fox Interactive are keen to celebrate the release of this superb first-person shooter; a lightning quick, hugely atmospheric experience that's essentially three games in one. Yep, you heard right. *Aliens vs Predator* offers three different playing experiences, depending on who you fancy controlling. There's the terrifyingly tense role of the Marine, the high-speed, wall-crawling Alien, plus, of course, the futuristic, Arnie-battering Predator.

Clearly, very few prizes could do justice to this multi-faceted game, which is why we've sorted out an incredible three-part reward for the winner. The trio of goods we've secured are the most generous we've given away for a long time – and remember, before you devour the list of booty below, that everything listed here is going to be won by *one* lucky person.

THE PRIZES, THEN, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

● A top-of-the-range Tiny Power Gamer Plus PC. You want specs? How's about this...

It's an Intel PII 400, with 128Mb RAM, 10Gb hard drive, DVD ROM, 56k Fax/Modem, 17" monitor, Joystick, Steering Wheel, Windows 98, and four DVD titles. Sound for this beast comes courtesy of Creative Labs, and their SoundBlaster Live! Players and 4-point surround sound speakers, while your 3D needs will be catered for by a 16Mb Voodoo3 3000 graphics card. And they've not even been released yet. How's that for cutting-edge? Plus, we'll throw in a copy of *Aliens vs Predator* to play on it.

● The second part of the prize is a truly delicious combo of couch-potato hardware that's sure to brighten up your living room. Sony are giving away one of their lovely widescreen TVs – the 66cm KV-28WF1 – to our lucky winner, along with a really clever VCR. "How is it so clever?" I hear you cry. Well, this baby features SmartLink technology which tells you exactly what's on your video tapes if, like us, you can never be bothered to label them.

● Hmm. But suppose the only thing you've got on video is Noel's House Party Christmas Special? When your mates demand a demonstration of Sony's televisual magic, they won't be fobbed off with Mr Blobby's hilarious antics. So to make the most of your kit, the third part of our tremendous trio will give you a head start. We've got the entire 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment video library to pass on to the lucky winner, including the Alien movies box-set, as well as both Predator movies. Not bad, eh?

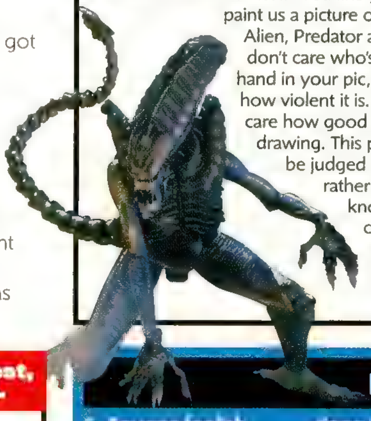
QUESTION

The "Fancy a threesome?" Contest

Ask the warden for some paints, and show us your art!

If you've managed to stop hyperventilating now, you'll want to know how to get your hands on those awesome prizes. And the answer, my friends, is an arty one. We're imploring you to share a smidgen of your artistic ability with us so that we may decorate our new office with your talent. We're not your common-or-garden gallery-goers, though; not for us the sublimely subtle impressionism of Monet, or the bold, almost brazen brush strokes of the Fauvists. No, give us a bit of HR Giger any day. Failing that, we like pictures of elephants. Or Spitfires.

Anyway, you can probably guess the subject matter for this contest. We'd like you to draw or paint us a picture of a battle 'twixt Alien, Predator and Marine. We don't care who's got the upper hand in your pic, we don't care how violent it is. We don't even care how good you are at drawing. This prize isn't going to be judged on artistic criteria, rather imagination, knowledge of the characters, and how exciting and action-packed the scene is...



RULES

1. Anyone foolish enough to have jobs with either Future Publishing or 20th Century Fox will be left at the mercy of the office Alien.
2. Entries arriving after 30th April will simply pile up and block the door, then we won't be able to get in and PC GAMER will die.
3. Multiple entries will be torn up and used as bedding in Kieron's hamster colony.
4. The Editor may be leaving, but he's ruthless. Don't argue.

Send this coupon with your answers to: The "Fancy a threesome?" Contest, PC GAMER, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2DL, to arrive by 30th April.

My representation of three-way action is sure to set pulses racing. Send my prizes, all of them, to:

Name ______________________

Address ______________________

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My most wanted

This bit's optional, but we'd like you to let us know the five forthcoming PC games you're most looking forward to, to aid us in compiling our Readers Most Wanted chart.

1 ______________________

2 ______________________

3 ______________________

4 ______________________

5 ______________________

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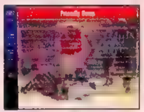

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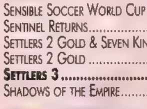

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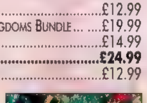

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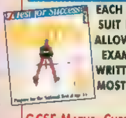

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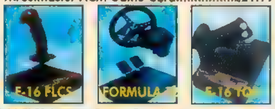

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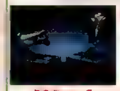

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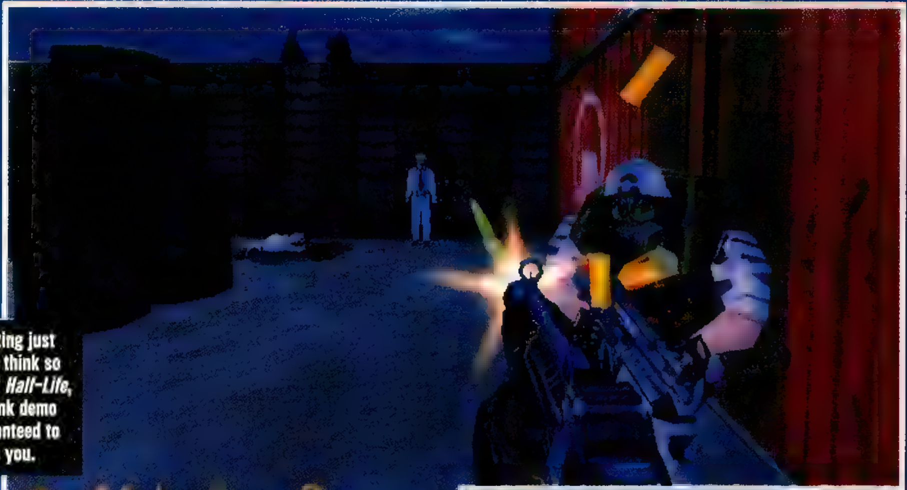
CDGAMER

Oh yes. It's here. If you're one of the deluded few who haven't yet played *Half-Life*, play it now. We've also got all three *Aliens vs Predator* demos, *Turok 2* and a new *Tomb Raider III* demo.

DEMO OF THE MONTH



Illustrating just why we think so much of *Half-Life*, the Uplink demo is guaranteed to impress you.

HALF-LIFE: UPLINK

SIERRA

Pentium 133, 24Mb RAM, Windows 95

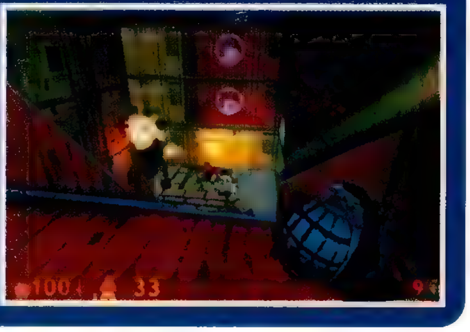
Massive playable demo featuring a specially created mission scenario that doesn't appear in the full game. The demo is situated in the Lambda Reactor Complex and there has been a breach of the reactor core, so your first task is to make your way to the communication dome and realign the transmitter so that you can radio for help. Unfortunately there is a plethora of crack troops and assorted aliens in your path, all with a keen interest in stopping you from reaching your goal.

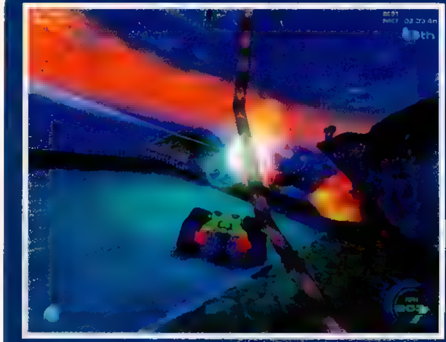
The scientists and security guards in the complex are all on your side, though, and you can issue them with commands by walking up to them and pressing the 'use item' key. We don't want to spoil all the goodies, so install the demo now and let the *Half-Life* experience engulf you.

This demo is on our 3D Extravaganza CD, along with some other cracking first-person shooters.

CONTROLS:

Up/Down Arrows or W/S – Run forward/backward
Left/Right Arrows – Turn left/right
A/D or ,/. – Strafe left/right
Space – Jump
Ctrl – Duck
V/C – Swim up/down
Page Up/Down – Look up/down
End – Look straight ahead
R – Reload
E – Use item
Shift & Up Arrow – Walk
F – Flashlight
1-5 – Weapon categories 1 to 5
Mouse movement – Look around
Left Mouse Button – Primary fire
Right Mouse Button – Alternate fire





ROLLCAGE

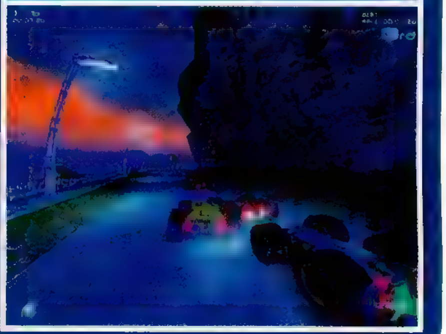
PSYGNOSIS

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95, D3D or 3Dfx accelerator

Stunning fast and furious arcade racing game, *Rollcage* reintroduces you to your lunch time and time again! This exclusive demo features the Daytona track from the Harpoon Islands World from the full version of *Rollcage*.

CONTROLS:

Up/Down Arrows – Accelerate/reverse
Left/Right Arrows – Steer left/right
Space – Brake
1/2 – Activate power-up 1 or 2



EXTREME TRIAL MOTOCROSS

THE DAWN INTERACTIVE

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

Experience the long and tortuous Austrian track in this new motocross game from Italy. Our demo features a single-player race – only four laps, mind – and a range of weather conditions including fog and rain.

CONTROLS:

A – Accelerator
Z – Brakes
Left/Right Arrows – Steer left/right
S/X – Gear up/down

TOCA 2

CODEMASTERS

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

Tackle three laps of the very fast Croft circuit in a Honda Accord in this playable demo of the impressive *TOCA 2*, which we gave 92% in our February issue. You can find a map of the track, along with some detailed hints on how to tackle it, in our Guidelines section this month.

CONTROLS:

Up/Down Arrows – Accelerate/brake
Left/Right Arrows – Steer left/right
F/V – Gear up/down
Insert/Page Up – Look left/right
Z – Look behind
C – Change camera

WARZONE 2100

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

Try out this updated demo of *Warzone 2100*, which not only features the single-player mission from the last demo but extensive multi-player options too. You can also check out Mark's in-depth review, which starts on page 78.

CONTROLS:

Insert – Open command console
S – Short range
L – Long range
D – Default range
< – Retreat at medium damage
> – Retreat at heavy damage
/ – Never retreat
F – Fire-at-will
E – Engage – return fire
C – Cease fire
G – Guard position
P – Pursue
Q – Patrol
H – Go home
R – Go for repair
Ctrl & R – Recycle
Ctrl & S – Select all units on screen
Ctrl & Z – Selects all units of type
Ctrl & V – Selects all VTOLs
Ctrl & H – Selects all hovers
Ctrl & W – Selects all wheels
Ctrl & T – Selects all tracks
Ctrl & F – Selects all half-tracks
Ctrl & A – Selects all combat units
Arrow Keys – Scroll view
Esc – Quit game
T – Type message to other players

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

Worms Armageddon received a justifiably high score of 90% last month. To find out why, simply load our playable demo, which features both single- and multi-player options. A word of warning, though: since the full game arrived in the office, people have gradually started to move away from *Quake II* at lunchtimes. Now, the sound of triumphant worms fills the air.

CONTROLS:

Left/Right Arrows – Move worm left/right
Enter – Jump forward
Backspace – Jump up
Double Backspace – Somersault up and backwards
Spacebar – Adjust power of projectile
Up/Down Arrows – Aim weapon
1-5 – Adjust fuse on grenade weapons
Left Mouse Button – Select
Right Mouse Button – Activate weapon selection screen
Esc – Options screen

***Worms:* keeping us from our daily intake of *Quake II*.**

SILVER

INFOGRAMES

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

Massive playable demo of this new RPG which hopes to knock *Final Fantasy VII* off its throne. Our demo features some early scenes from the full game which introduce you to the main characters, guide you through the combat controls and the beginning of the main quest. The game is predominantly mouse driven with the left button used for actions – including sword-sweeps in combat – and the right mouse button used for options.

***Superbike* has some of the best crashes we've yet seen, so we rate it pretty highly.**

SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

You've read the review in this month's mag, now take to the track for a three-lap race around the historic Monza circuit against seven of the world's best superbike riders. The demo features two levels of play, arcade and simulation modes, plus a range of display settings to suit most systems. Beware, though, as this is a seriously power-hungry game!

CONTROLS:

Up/Down Arrows – Accelerate/brake
Left/Right Arrows – Steer left/right
A/Z – Shift up/down
S – Sit up
Spacebar – Look behind
Esc – Pause race
F1 – Head camera
F2 – Cockpit camera
F3 – Shoulder camera
F4 – Behind bike camera

ALPHA CENTAURI

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

Playable demo of Sid Meier's impressive new turn-based space strategy game, *Alpha Centauri*, awarded 90% in the March issue of PC GAMER in a head-to-head battle with *Civilization: Call To Power*. You begin the demo with one exploration unit, so your first task is to explore your immediate

⇨

THE INTERFACE AND MENUS

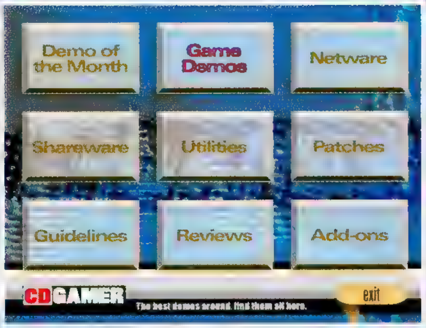
Insert the CD-ROM into your drive and the CD GAMER menu program will 'autorun' (so long as you have this Windows 95 feature enabled) and after a few seconds you will be presented with an introduction screen. You are then invited to 'Run the menu'. Selecting this option will launch the CD GAMER menu program. From here you can install this month's selection of game demos and access the reviews database and guidelines sections.

GAME OF THE MONTH

Click here to go straight to the game of the month.

RETURN TO WINDOWS

If, for some reason, the menu program does not automatically start, perhaps the autorun feature is disabled on your system. Go to the START/RUN command on the taskbar and type D:\PCG.EXE (where D is the letter of your CD-ROM drive).



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If your CD is defective, please return it to the address below. Please make sure you have followed our installation procedures correctly before you send it back to us to ensure that there is a physical problem. Please send the CD along with a description of the fault together with a self addressed envelope to the address below. Return postage will be paid.

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A CD should only need replacing if the CD itself cannot be read. If, instead, you are experiencing problems with an individual demo or application, phone the number below and ask for our technical support line. This is open between 9.30am and 6pm from Monday to Friday.

Tel 01225 442244 (Ask for Technical Support)
Fax 01225 732279
E-mail: support@futurenet.co.uk

Please note that the help-line staff provide assistance with technical problems directly related to our cover CD and cannot provide training on software or hardware in general.

● The PC GAMER CD-ROMs have been thoroughly tested at all stages of production and certified 'virus free' by an independent organisation. We recommend that you always run a virus checker on ANY software before running it. Future Publishing Ltd cannot accept any responsibility for disruption, damage and/or loss to your data or your computer system which may occur while using these CD-ROMs, the programs or the data on them. Ensure that you have up-to-date backups of data contained on your hard drives before running any new software.

Alpha Centauri may not be pretty, but it'll steal your life away.

surroundings, build a colony pod and select a suitable site for your base. To scroll around the map, click the mouse pointer on a square and the screen will re-centre on this point; to select a unit, simply click on it. *Alpha Centauri* is extremely deep and complex, so to get you started, please refer to the file 'Demo Quickstart.Doc' in the game installation directory for a proper introduction to the game controls.

IMPERIALISM II

MINDSCAPE

Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

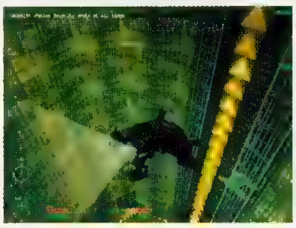
Imperialism II: Age Of Exploration is a turn-based strategy game set in the time of the exploration and conquest of the New World. The riches and exotic resources of the New World are there to be discovered, the key being to exploit them effectively. You can become a great conqueror or you can do business with the natives, and shield them from the other Great Powers.

Whichever strategy you pursue, you will need to build a strong economy. Develop as much as you can internally, and trade for the rest on the world market (but watch out for pirates). Build a good labour force to get a foothold in world economy. Try to get ahead in the technology race (and get those spies out there to pinch ideas). And don't forget a strong military, for only a mighty nation can unite Europe under one flag. In this demo you will be able to play the tutorial scenario that will allow you basic access to all of the major portions of the game: Trade, Diplomacy, Combat, Industrial Expansion, Research, Exploration, and Empire Building.

LANDER

PSYGNOSIS

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95, 3D accelerator



Playable demo level of this new futuristic 3D shoot-'em-up from Psygnosis. In the demo mission you must locate three red containers scattered around the area, each bearing an 'MCGA' logo. Once found, you should return them to the ship in which you arrived, and place them in the cargo bins on the hangar deck. Also, keep your eyes peeled for cash pick-ups and health pick-ups (use tractor beam to acquire all items). We'll have an in-depth review of *Lander* in next month's issue, but until then you can make up your own mind.

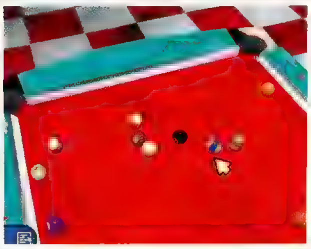
CONTROLS:

Mouse – Pitch and yaw
Left Mouse Button – Thrust
C – Rotate Lander left
V – Rotate Lander right
X – Fire main weapon
Space (held down) – Activate tractor beam to refuel or pick up objects. Release button when target acquired.
A – Move camera position up (used to look 'down' on the Lander. Useful when descending. Press twice for more extreme angle).
Z – Move camera position down (used to look 'Up' at the Lander. Useful when climbing. Press twice for more extreme angle).
W (hold down) – If your Lander tips over, this fires all your attitude jets in an attempt to right your Lander.
N – Select waypoint. Cycles through all available waypoints. The dial on the bottom left of the screen is your waypoint indicator. Lining the arrow to 12 o'clock points your Lander straight at your craft.

POOL SHARK

GREMLIN INTERACTIVE

Pentium 133, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95



The demo allows you to play a game of Six Ball against Ed Case, one of the game's many CPU players. To beat him you must pot the balls in order, and be the player to pot the last ball. The demo supports mouse control only.

CONTROLS:

Hold Right Button & Move Mouse – Line-up shot
Hold Left Button & Move Mouse – Take shot/adjust power

BRIAN LARA CRICKET

CODEMASTERS

Pentium 166, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

This demo pitches you into the pressure situation of the last three overs of a one-day international match between South Africa and the West Indies at Cape Town. South Africa scored 246 for 7 off their 50 overs and the West Indies are up against it at 218 for 7 with 3 overs left, but Brian Lara is at the crease on 66 not out. You must take control of the West Indies' batsmen and try to achieve the required target. Alternatively, see if you can do worse than they did during their winter tour.

CONTROLS:

1 – Cover drive
2 – Straight drive
3 – On drive: frontfoot/backfoot
4 – Square drive
6 – Leg glance
7 – Square cut/late cut
8 – Defensive: forward defensive/backfoot defensive
9 – Sweep/pull/hook
Enter – Normal shot/start run
R Ctrl – Six-hit shot/turn around mid-run
R Shift – Defensive shortcut (no need to hold directional key)
0 Ins – Leave ball/duck (no need to hold directional key)
SPACE – Menu

3D EXTRAVAGANZA!

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

ALIEN, MARINE AND PREDATOR DEMOS

FOX INTERACTIVE

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95, D3D compatible accelerator

The Alien likes to use your gun as a toothpick, and your ribs as a toast-rack.

An exclusive playable demo of an Alien mission from *Aliens vs Predator*, combined with previously seen demos of the Marine and Predator missions. The new Alien demo being mainly about movement through stealth combined with a deadly surprise attack.

PREDATOR CONTROLS:

Up/Down Arrows – Forward/backward
Left/Right Arrows – Strafe left/right
Numpad 4/6 – Turn left/right
Right Alt & Left/Right Arrow – Strafe left/right
A/Z – Look up/down
S – Centre view
Left Shift – Walk
Right Shift – Jump
Space – Operate
I – Toggle cloaking
Q/W – Next/previous weapon
Page Up/Down – Zoom in/out
L – Cycle vision modes
Default mouse settings are full MouseLook, and fire primary and fire secondary.

ALIEN CONTROLS:

(Where different)
Right Ctrl – Crouch/climb
I – Toggle between HUNT and NAVIGATION modes
Default mouse settings are full MouseLook.
Default mouse buttons are 'Claw Attack' and 'Tail Attack'.

MARINE CONTROLS:

(Where different)
I – Toggle Image Intensifier
Q – Next weapon
W – Previous weapon
L – Throw flare
Backspace – Previous weapon
The default mouse settings are full MouseLook, and fire primary and fire secondary.

TUROK 2

ACCLAIM

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95, D3D accelerator

The N64 hit sequel finally makes its way to the PC. In this impressive playable mission you are located in the Port of Adia with the task of rescuing four children.

CONTROLS:

Enter – Start
Ctrl – Fire
Space – Jump
Up/Down Arrows – Forward/backward
,/. – Strafe left/right
Page Up/Down – Look up/down
Left/Right Arrows – Turn left/right
H – Alternate ammo
N – Alternate weapon
A/Z – Weapon select up/down
B – Crouch toggle
J – Play dead
Shift – Sniper mode
Caps Lock – Map toggle

TOMB RAIDER III

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

This new, updated demo of the third Lara Croft game sees you taking control of the shapely heroine and strutting your stuff in the South Pacific, while attempting to avoid the local natives.

CONTROLS:

Up/Down Arrows – Run forward/step backward
Left/Right Arrows – Turn left/right
Esc – Options/inventory
Space – Toggle weapon
Ctrl – Fire
Alt – Jump
, – Crouch (Crawl in conjunction with direction)
. – Dash (Press while running)
/ – Flare
Keypad 0 – End roll
Shift & Up Arrow – Walk
Shift & Left/Right Arrow – Sidestep left/right

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

EIDOS

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

A new playable demo of this intriguing first-person game from the makers of the *Flight Unlimited* series. Your mission this time is entitled Assassins, and sees you utilising your newly acquired lockpicks in a bid to infiltrate the local Hammer Temple in order to relieve them of all their lovely gold.

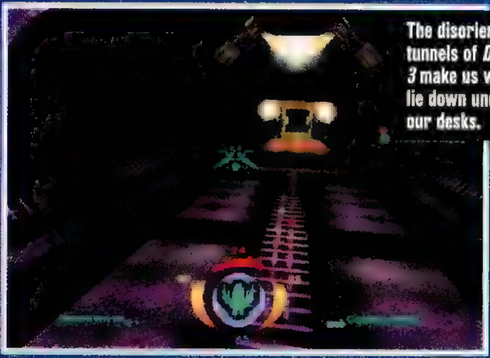
CONTROLS:

W – Run forward
S – Walk forward
X – Walk backward
Z/C – Slide left/right
A/D – Turn left/right
T/G – Look up/down
V – Centre view
Q/E – Lean left/right
F – Crouch
Space – Jump
Left Mouse Button – Attack
Right Mouse Button – Use item
Keypad – Block
Shift – Speed toggle
]/[– Next/previous item
1 through 9 – Select weapon
Backspace – Clear weapon

DESCENT 3

INTERPLAY

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95



The disorienting tunnels of *Descent 3* make us want to lie down under our desks.

An updated demo of popular 3D shooter, *Descent 3*, which takes advantage of the recent bug fixes and enhancements added by the recent patch.

CONTROLS:

A – Accelerate
Z – Reverse
S – Afterburner
Left/Right Arrows – Turn left/right
Up/Down – Pitch up/down
Ctrl – Fire primary weapon
Space – Fire secondary weapon
F – Flare
H – Headlight
Tab – Automap
Q/E – Bank left/right
Numpad 7/9 – Slide left/right
Numpad +/- – Slide up/down
1 – Laser
2 – Gauss cannon
3 – Napalm cannon
6 – Concussion missile
7 – Homing missile
F1 – Help screen
F2 – Game options
F3 – Show/hide cockpit

DELTA FORCE

NOVALOGIC

Pentium 166, 32Mb RAM, Windows 95

The fourth demo version of *Delta Force* utilising their 'tweaked' game engine, which should give better performance on lower spec PCs.

CONTROLS:

Left/Right Arrows – Strafe left/right
Up/Down Arrows – Move forward/back
Mouse Movement – Aim
Left Mouse Button – Fire
Right Mouse Button – Jump
Keypad 0 – Assume prone position
C – Crouch
S – Scope
3 – M19 Pistol
4 – M4 machine gun (burst mode)
5 – M203 grenade launcher
6 – M4 machine gun (single shot mode)
F1 – Help screen

MAIL US!

As always, we are interested to receive feedback from you concerning our cover CDs. If you have any comments or suggestions for future discs then please contact our resident CD-ROM editor, Trevor Witt, by e-mail on tfwitt@futurenet.co.uk or at the usual postal address.

INTERACTIVE FUTURES

SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

You're an experienced industry professional, of course, with a proven track record of cutting-edge games titles. But do you have the talent and ambition to take your career to a new level?

INTERACTIVE FUTURES currently has vacancies for a few highly creative people eager to join our world-class in-house development team...

INCOMPATIBILITY SPECIALISTS

Successful applicants will need to demonstrate a total mastery of device control protocols – and have the confidence to ignore them completely. They'll be responsible for ensuring that no conceivable PC hardware set-up will be able to run our games without hours of re-configuration. Particular expertise in the field of 3D card incompatibility would be a distinct advantage.

BUG DESIGNERS

We're looking for experienced C++ programmers with the talent, imagination and mischievous sense of fun to work in our busy bug design department. You'll be creating truly innovative bugs for a wide variety of games; not just traditional 'crash after intro sequence' bugs or 'crash during save game' bugs, but more subtle and elusive idiosyncrasies for our exciting line-up of mould-breaking PC titles.

Excessive Games

Throwing Ourselves **Head-First** Into The Future

☐ **Glitch Crafter**

Do you hate – *really* hate – flawless 3D environments and crackle-free sound? Does the idea of smooth uninterrupted gameplay wake you, sweating and shaking, in the middle of the night? If you've also got a good degree in Computing, or comparable industry experience, you could be the person we're looking for to work on our new roster of high-profile sports titles, including *Fatal Bowling*, *Susan Tully's Lacrosse*, and *Football Strip Merchandiser Pro 99*.

☐ **Slowdown Engineers**

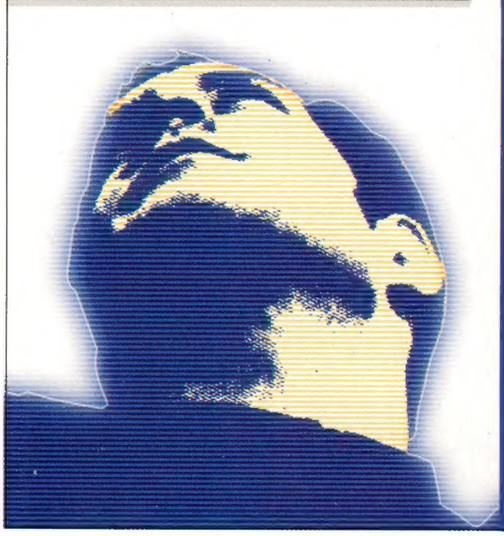
We also have vacancies for a number of dedicated and hard-working programmers to slow down our new games. If our titles are to be thought of as 'state of the art', it's imperative that they require the newest and most expensive hardware – embarrassingly, though, some of them currently run smoothly on an unaccelerated P350! We need *you* to come and put a stop to this, filling them up with extraneous graphical detail and pig-headedly inelegant coding.

Over The Top

As the hyper-successful London-based design studio behind recent mega-hits *Brusque, Tactical Air Combateers* and *Tactical Air Combateers Golf*, we're currently looking to expand our management team with the following key appointments.

Leaping From The Diving Board Of Uniqueness

Into The Swimming Pool Of Thrill Delivery



GENRE COMPLIANCE MANAGER

With several years' experience as a producer of AA+ games titles, you'll have a disgust for originality and a passion for mediocrity. With your eyes firmly fixed on the bottom line of the balance sheet, and a fear of change matched only by your sense of personal insecurity, you'll be responsible for ensuring that all our new PC titles are direct rip-offs of last year's successes. You must be humourless, inflexible and loud enough to shout down any junior programmers who may have their own ideas. A generous salary and benefits package awaits the right candidate.

BLAH MERCHANT

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for an obnoxious tosser with a mobile phone to shout at people and lie. As a member of our small but tightly knit blah team, you'll be working closely with our Senior Hype Executive to raise the awareness quotient of our games within relevant demographic bracketings, and ensure sympathetic media coverage across Europe. Your capacity for alcohol will be tested at interview.

Over The Top

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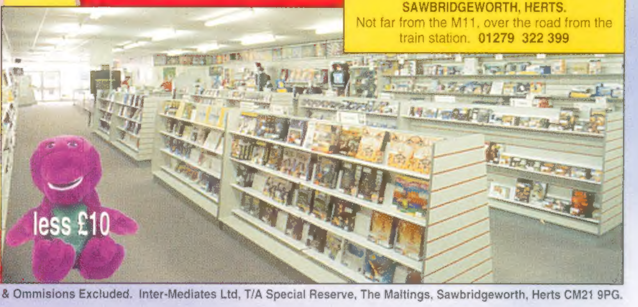

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